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The Nation. October 18, 1980 $1

EDITORIAL

CINEMA VERITE

"I don't care what they do, so long as they don't do it in the street and frighten the horses." A cynic contemplating the expulsion of Representative Michael Myers by the House might paraphrase Mrs. Patrick Campbell's dictum for the video age as follows: "Don't do it on television and frighten the voters."

The fact that Myers's corruption was recorded by hidden television cameras for all later to see—not only the jury but the House ethics committee and viewers of the evening news—surely played a part in the decision to impose a sanction that hasn't been used since the Civil War. TV's awesome verisimilitude may also have had something to do with the jury's quick conviction of Representative John W. Jenrette Jr.

At this stage, we are not ready to rush through the two disgraced Congressmen's application for martyrdom, but we can't help wondering what the public reaction would be if some of the perfectly legal transactions between Congressmen and lobbyists, interest groups, fat cats, defense contractors and the like were videotaped and served up on the nightly news. Only the proceedings on the floor of the House are now recorded on closed-circuit TV, but consider the impact if coverage were expanded to include the cloakrooms, the after-hours office hideaways, the confabs with industry reps, like those by a House appropriations subcommittee last year regarding the Federal Trade Commission's investigations of those industries.

Perhaps this new political *cinéma vérité* could educate the voters on the subtle differences between blatantly selling one's office, as Myers and Jenrette did, and the normal exchange of quid pro quos when a Congressman horse trades his vote to the boys from Boeing or the American Medical Association's PAC. It might not frighten the voters but it would certainly remove their blinders.

U.S. TILT TO IRAN?
Claudia Wright

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EXPLOITING NAMIBIA
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BLUE-COLLAR BLUES

WORKING PEOPLE TALK BACK

JOE FLAHERTY

Not so strangely, the national election coincides with our cynical mating season. Suddenly, those who have gone unwooed are lusted after. By the blunt grace of sheer voting numbers, the working class is hotly pursued by politicians with Presidential climax in mind.

It's a marvelous transformation to behold. The once plain jane finds her hair unpinned and her glasses removed—she becomes the darling of the democracy.

Thus, the working class is "the salt of the earth," "the backbone of the country," "the silent majority" and other paeans that momentarily transform these people into treacly Hummel figures. It's heady stuff. But as with other "quickies," the pursuer usually walks off with the prize, while the pursued is left pregnant with forgotten promises.

The working-class affair with the media is no different. During the electoral season, their opinions are sought as if they were sweaty Solomons; while in normal times, it's safe to say the working class breaks into the newspapers only in select categories.

Media and government have acted in complicity to shun working people since these people, because of their immigrant history, have played the obsequious servant, content with handouts from high places. But that is changing now. In traveling through the states, I have found a newborn anger in people. Anger with government, with media, but, more important, with themselves, since they feel they have abandoned a spiritual legacy. There has been a snarling of their roots. Unlike Willy Loman, these working

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LETTERS.

DU PONT PROTESTS

Wilmington, Del.

Contrary to the statements in "Blacks Only Need Apply" [Richard Severo, *The Nation*, Sept. 20], Du Pont does not use sickle-cell blood tests to discriminate against blacks. The tests are not, and never have been, used for job placement but are offered to black employees and applicants only as a service for their personal health planning.

The erroneous accusation, which also appeared in a *New York Times* article on February 4, could have been avoided by more diligent reporting. Any confusion that resulted from Severo's contact with different Du Pont sources could have readily been clarified in further discussions with me. Instead, it was used as the basis for a sensational allegation that was erroneous, and it reflected unfairly on the practices of the Du Pont Company.

The Washington Post acted responsibly when it reviewed the facts and acknowledged that it was wrong in reprinting the allegation of the *Times* article.

We regret that *The Nation* has further perpetuated misstatements that do a disservice to Du Pont and shall appreciate your printing this denial of them. *Bruce W. Karrh, M.D.*
Corporate Medical Director
E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company

SEVERO PERSISTS

New York City

Questions about Du Pont's approach to genetic screening will persist as long as Bruce Karrh and other Du Pont officials insist on issuing general denials instead of specific answers to the questions. Among the questions Karrh has ignored:

(*1*) If the Du Pont tests are only for the personal benefit of black workers, why are they mentioned in the Charles Reinhardt article, since it purportedly deals not with "personal health planning" for black workers but with people who are said to be abnormally susceptible to chemicals?

(*2*) Why are blacks the only racial or ethnic group singled out in the Reinhardt article?

(*3*) How can Karrh stand by his original contention that the tests are "purely for the education and edification of the individual involved," when Du Pont's own public relations department admits the company does not have, and has never had, a uniform national policy for explaining the sickle-trait test to its black employees?

(*4*) If no blacks have ever been transferred to other jobs because of their sickle trait, how does Karrh explain the statement of William Golt, president of the Chemical Workers Association, a company union, who said he knew of at least one black transferred because of the test?

There was no "confusion" on my part in either my article for *The New York Times* or for *The Nation*. The confusion seems to lie with Karrh's apparent belief that Du Pont can behave illogically and inconsistently on the genetic screening issue and make it all go away through the magic of Karrh's medical press agentry.

To Du Pont's credit, however, its press agentry did work extremely well at *The Washington Post*, which retracted an editorial after it received a packet of material from Du Pont that it never bothered to check with anybody at the company. Thus, his endorsement of that newspaper's performance is as understandable as it is sad.

Richard Severo

POLISH MYTH

Evansville, Ind.

Re your editorial statement ["Workers Arisen," *The Nation*, Aug. 30-Sept. 6] that "it was only sixty years ago that the Poles beat back a Russian army outside Warsaw," several facts should be noted. First, the Polish Army, led by Joseph Pilsudski, armed and egged on by France and British conservatives like Winston Churchill, initiated hostilities by invading the Ukraine and capturing Kiev in April and May 1920. Pilsudski's plan was to incorporate the Ukraine in a grandiose Polish federation. But the Red Army quickly counterattacked in June and July, causing the Poles to retreat, their army in a state of near disintegration. By August, Marshal Foch warned that "there was nothing to prevent the Bolsheviks from getting to Warsaw."

Contrary to what Richard Nixon has written in *The Real War*, namely that the Soviet leaders always advance where they find "mush" and halt only when confronted with steel, my research into the Soviet-Polish war indicates that the early Soviet leaders (Lenin, Trotsky, Chicherin, Radek, et al.) were quite reluctant to advance into Poland and were more eager for normal trade and diplomatic relations with the West than for spreading their revolution. Throughout their counteroffensive, they urged the Poles to negotiate and even offered territorial terms more favorable to Poland than Britain was suggesting (the Curzon Line). The short-lived incursion by the Red Army into ethnic Poland during the first half of August was partly due to Poland's refusal to negotiate peace (her delegates walked out of some *pourparlers* on August 2) and partly due to ambitious generals such as Mikhail Tukhachevsky, who actually bolted from commissar control and issued orders on his own.

The Red Army was ordered out of Poland shortly after Polish delegates returned to the negotiating table and shortly before Pilsudski launched his famous counterattack which allegedly saved Warsaw. The Polish leader later described the difficulty he had in finding the Red Army in mid-August, during the "Miracle of the Vistula." Churchill also acknowledged that "there was hardly any fighting." And an American military adviser who was with the Polish cavalry reported that "the Bolsheviks had begun their retreat before the Polish operations were ready." This is not to denigrate the valor of the Poles, who indeed resisted the Russian troops and formed workers' militias in the process. But the myth that the Poles actually defeated the Red Army in 1920 became so widespread that Polish leaders believed their cavalry could stand up to Nazi Panzer divisions in 1939. Romantic illusions about previous wars often lead to tragic miscalculations in later years. *Tom Fiddick, Ph.D.*
Professor of History

FEMINIST PROTESTS NEIER

New York City

Are there not far more pertinent issues on the minds of women and progressive journals of opinion than the plight of one, albeit mildly intriguing, character caught in the midst of (as Aryeh Neier describes it) an age-old problem? Neier's piece ["Memoirs of a Woman's Displeasure," *The Nation*, Aug. 16-23]

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EDITORIALS.

Endangered List

Are books a product like soap, toilet paper, detergents or widgets? In its interpretation of a Supreme Court decision in the *Thor Power Tool Company* case, the Internal Revenue Service has ruled in effect that they are. The Court said the Thor Power Tool Company could not take tax depreciations for tools in its inventories until they have left inventory; the I.R.S. has now applied this ruling to unsold books, which publishers have long been accustomed to depreciating in inventory. As a result, many publishers are clearing out their backlists—the 400,000 or so titles that have some enduring worth, ranging from literary classics through works of significance to scholars or lay seekers of useful information—selling what they can to remainder dealers and pulping the rest.

The I.R.S. ruling will inflict great cultural damage. It will decimate an important cultural repository—backlisted books; many of these will go out of print and become unobtainable by students, scholars and general readers. We deplore the ruling, and support legislation to exempt publishing from its effect (Senator Daniel P. Moynihan promises to introduce such a bill in the next session of Congress).

But the hue and cry within the book industry needs to be put into perspective. The role of the publisher's backlist, once a staple of the industry, was already shrinking. As Thomas Whiteside reported in a recent series on publishing in *The New Yorker*, formerly, 60 percent of a serious publishing firm's business might come from sales of backlist titles, but the percentage today is more like 15 or 20 percent. As publishers—especially those owned by conglomerates—come under increasing pressure to generate a high cash flow through sales of subsidiary rights to blockbuster best sellers, they prune their slow-selling backlist titles in order to avoid the expense of storage and the high cost of the periodic small printings needed to replenish them.

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Another factor is the growing dominance on the retail side of the large chains and the corresponding decline of independent bookstores. The former emphasize fast turnover and the latest hot title; the latter specialize in personal service and keep in stock a variety of books for individual tastes, including backlist titles. The net result is that the slow-selling books of literary, scholarly and cultural merit are going out of print much faster than in former days.

The effect of the Thor Power Tool Company ruling is thus to drastically accelerate an ongoing trend. As marketing specialists and accountants from the conglomerates gain greater control in the industry, books are indeed becoming like soap, toilet paper, detergents, widgets and, well, power tools. In the prevailing language of Hollywood and computerese, books are "product"; publishing is the "softwear" of the entertainment industry; "category" romances are manufactured according to carefully calculated formulas and sold in supermarkets—like soap. Paperback houses seek the big blockbusters, paying five- and six-figure sums to get them, and cut back on worthy titles simply because they would take up too much rack space. The many good books that are still being published, by large publishers as well as small, lead mayfly lives, doomed to quick remainderdom and deprived now of even the hope of backlist reprieve.

And so, while the I.R.S. presumably intended no cultural judgment in its ruling, it inadvertently recognized what a powerful element in the book industry already believes. Some of the publishers who piously protest the Thor Power Tool ruling as a rape of our cultural heritage are working to diminish that heritage in favor of the quick buck. Let the book industry be exempted from the ruling, but let it prove itself worthy of the exemption by continuing to publish books, not products.

Whose Orthodoxy?

In 1975 the Island Trees, Long Island, Board of Education removed from school libraries books by Kurt Vonnegut, Bernard Malamud and other prominent writers. According to members of the board, these books are "anti-American, anti-Christian, anti-Semitic and just plain filthy." Last year a Federal District Court judge upheld this action because, he said, "one of the principal functions of public education is indoctrinative, to transmit the basic values of the community. . . . A constitutionally required book tenure principle would infringe upon an elected school board's discretion in determining what community values were to be transmitted."

As we pointed out at the time [Aryeh Neier, "Banning Books," *The Nation*, October 27, 1979], it is one thing to recognize that education indoctrinates and quite another to elevate this observation into law. As such, it has implications that go even beyond removing books from libraries. Speakers could be banned, teachers could be fired and the discussion of ideas could be suppressed in the discretion of a majority of a school board. As custodians of "community values," school board members would be empowered to prohibit any expression that does not conform to their understanding of those values.

Fortunately, the District Court's decision has now been overturned by the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The court's majority implicitly rejects the view that the members of a board of education may indoctrinate children in their own views and exclude all contrary views. The First Amendment rights of schoolchildren are violated, according to Judge Charles Sifton's opinion, when "political views and personal taste are being asserted not in the interests of the children's well-being but rather for the purpose of establishing those views as the correct and orthodox ones for all purposes in the particular community."

The battle of Island Trees is not over yet. Most likely, the next step will be an appeal by the school board to the Supreme Court. As the Justices consider the case, they might bear in mind the Court's words in the *Tinker* case in 1969: "In our system, state-operated schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism. . . . Students may not be regarded as closed-circuit recipients of only that which the State chooses to communicate. They may not be confined to the expression of those sentiments that are officially approved."

CAMPAIGN WATCH

The Media-ators

If you read recent opinion polls a certain way, the American people are leaning toward electing as President the man who "might be most likely to get the United States into another war"—but only after inspiring "more confidence in the White House," "handling the economy" better than the incumbent and giving less "help to the elderly, the poor, minorities and the handicapped." Or would the war come first? It's a challenge to try to put those Reagan-pleasing conclusions of the Harris poll of September 22 into a logical sequence of cause and effect. And, in any order you place them, they make a caricature of the popular mood. Is there something seriously wrong with polling or politicians? Or is it the people who are at fault?

Let us agree with the candidates that the people whose votes they seek are sound, patriotic and right-thinking. Then the trouble must lie with the candidates themselves or else with the techniques of opinion-sounding. Those techniques can't be wrong because Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter are controlled by their pollsters. We're left with the candidates themselves, then, maneuvering toward a precise center that would command an Electoral College majority of one vote. However much they may submit to the commands of the manipulators, the decision to do so is theirs. They could therefore change it all, toss overboard the mechanics and be themselves, if that is imaginable.

But how would the press—the media-ators—deal with a real campaign "on the issues"? They wouldn't know how to

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handle such a peculiar thing. So one must conclude from the way they are dealing with the current reality. The political reporting of 1980 is almost totally narcissistic. That is, the reporters are so caught up in the process, so spellbound by mere technique, so helplessly manipulated by the manipulators and so resentful of that undignified role that what they mainly describe are their problems and themselves—cracked mirrors reflecting a forged picture.

The principal theme of the last few days, now that Reagan's handlers have their indiscreet tiger back in his cage, has been Carter's "meanness." This characterological fix is based on nothing more than a couple of words—"racist" and "war." They were never, of course, directly applied to Reagan by Carter; code words did the work well enough. There is no need for an exegesis of the uncollected works of Ronald Reagan to establish the justice, or not, of these allegations. His "racism" is of the country-club sort, more chilly than chilling. As for "war," Reagan has gone from vague gunboatism to the demand for nuclear "superiority," a progression that seems to justify harsher terms than Carter's vague charges. Still, there are reams of comment on Carter's "mean streak" and even Britain's *The Economist* finds Carter's "hypocrisy more offensive than his meanness."

The fact is that there is less substance in 1980s rhetoric, less clear differentiation of positions between the two party nominees, than ever before. Shadow-boxing is too precise a word for what is going on out there where the media event has replaced the stump. The candidates are fifth-rate symbolists sending out "messages" to imagined constituencies in the mists.

As for the nonparty candidate, John Anderson is reduced by the persistent "spoiler" question ("you can't win, so why do you stay in?") to proclaiming that he is real and that he could actually win. And, as the campaign's remaining days dwindle down, Anderson waits for the bankers' reading of the polls (and therefore of their chances of repayment) before he can know whether he'll be able to borrow the money that could make him a contender, through advertising. No major candidate has been so beholden to the bankers since "the interests" owned half the U.S. Senate in the Gilded Age. That is just one of the ironies, oddities or contradictions of a campaign in which Reagan dares to use a peroration that speaks of America as "a shining city on a hill . . . for all mankind" when the real cities he would spurn in office are crumbling from cruel neglect.

Meanwhile, day after day the news of the campaign that will determine the head of government and state of the world's oldest democracy and the makeup of the body that makes its laws fails to appear above the fold of the major newspapers' front pages. Political news has become a matter of "style," which might best be consigned to the Style section. As one of Reagan's handlers said of the "debate" with Anderson, it's "a style thing . . . it showed . . . he's not a madman."

BLAIR CLARK

Blair Clark is contributing editor of The Nation.

Tilting to Iran?

The border between Iraq and Iran was of little international concern when, on April 19, 1969, the Shah of Iran announced that he was renouncing a 1937 agreement and assuming full sovereignty over the Shatt al Arab waterway to the midstream line. This was an illegal act, but the Shah's superior arms prevailed. In a show of force, an Iranian ship was sent down the estuary from Khurramshahr to the Gulf, escorted by a large naval and air force. Iraq, whose Baathist regime was only nine months old at the time, its air force still depleted by the losses of the 1967 war against Israel, the army tied down by the Kurdish rebellion in the north and its oil revenues only a tiny fraction of the Shah's, let the ship go by without a shot. After six years of periodic shooting matches, several hundred casualties, international mediation missions and an intensified round of fighting in Iraqi Kurdistan, Iraq agreed to an Iranian treaty that legalized the status quo in 1975.

Nothing the Shah did stimulated the intense international concern that Baghdad provoked with its announcement of September 7 that it would reassert its claims to a strip of the central border zone, and its follow-up claim on September 17 that the Shatt al Arab River would be restored to its 1937 status under Iraqi sovereignty. The legality of the Iraqi territorial claims is relatively solid—even the Shah's negotiators are said to have agreed after 1975 to return the central border strip—and though the violent means by which Iraq asserted its demands are wrongful under international law, they are on a par with the Shah's use of armed force to stake his claim in the first place.

In the past, settlements in the disputes between Iran and Iraq have always been the result of pressure by the colonial Turkish or European powers on either or both sides. The terms negotiated have usually favored the stronger of the two sides, backed by the strongest of the colonial powers. The current conflict marks the first time the Arab side has been stronger on its own than the Iranian; in the first two weeks of fighting, the Iraqis scored the first convincing victory of an Arab army over a non-Arab one in modern history. This is also the first time that neither Iraq nor Iran can count on European intervention to nudge a settlement in its favor.

Since neither side is showing much flexibility on negotiating terms, and neither can be pushed easily from the outside, the signs point to a protracted conflict that could drag on as long as the last one, from 1969 to 1975—far longer than the world can afford to wait for its oil supplies. But unless a settlement is reached before winter sets in, Iraq's siege of Khuzestan's refineries and ports is likely to choke off the food and fuel Iran badly needs; as the economy slowly strangles, the Ayatollah Khomeini regime may fall to internal factions that are willing to make a deal with Iraq. That at least is the Iraqi strategy at the moment.

The irony of the situation is that the American and Arab objectives in this conflict are identical. Both would like to see the overthrow of the Khomeini regime, supported by the

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Iranian Army, with someone like the Shah's last Prime Minister, Shahpur Bakhtiar, as the new head of government.

Why then did the Carter Administration appear to tilt toward Khomeini's side at the time of Jimmy Carter's press conference on September 24? The President hinted that in exchange for the release of the hostages the United States would provide military supplies for Iran. This was one of the questions Iraqi Foreign Minister Sadun Hammadi raised at his meeting with Secretary of State Edmund Muskie at the United Nations. The Iraqis also believe that outside help was necessary for the September 30 Iranian air attack on the highly secret French nuclear reactor being built near Baghdad and for the sabotage of Iraqi oil pipelines crossing Turkey and Syria. Despite unusual security in Turkey following the Ankara coup, saboteurs, allegedly Kurds, were able to blow up a section of the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline on September 27. Pumping of Iraqi oil to the Syrian refinery at Baniyas was blocked the next day. There are also unconfirmed reports that Iran has sought British assistance to keep its force of Chieftain tanks operational. If the Western powers are encouraging a secret war against Iraq —a move that is bound to reinforce Iraq's hostility and protract the conflict without foreseeable end—is the objective to prevent an Arab victory, whatever the local rights or wrongs might be and contrary to the United States' interest in the restoration of oil supplies?

Western concern that Iraq's Saddam Hussein is aiming to replace the Shah as the strong man of the Gulf is not shared by the Arab Gulf states who would be the obvious victims if Iraq's "Prussian" tendencies and Hussein's personal ambitions are as they are portrayed in the West. So far there has not been a crack in Arab solidarity. Even the hypercautious Saudis signaled through their customary spokesman on delicate matters, the Emirate of Qatar, that, in the words of the Qatari Foreign Minister, "We stand by the side of fraternal Iraq in its dispute with Iran." Saudi Crown Prince Fahd vigorously disputed a Beirut report that he had offered to mediate the conflict or ever would do so. The al-Sabah family of Kuwait, whose own border dispute with Iraq is still not formally settled, has not bolted from the Arab entente either.

So solid has the entente appeared that several important factions of the Arab left have broken with Baghdad because of it. Palestinian leaders like George Habash, whose offices in Baghdad have been closed and representatives evicted, have attacked Hussein for betraying the Baath Party's revolutionary principles and abandoning the cause of the progressive forces in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms. Can Habash and the President of the United States both be right and on the same side? Can the United States really intend to back the extension of Khomeini's Islamic revolution to the Shiite communities on the Arab side of the Gulf?

The answer is that however distasteful Khomeini's revolution may be to Washington, the United States would prefer a debilitated Iran fomenting trouble among its Arab neighbors—not enough trouble to change the status quo, just enough to keep the sheiks edgy—to a victorious Iraq solidifying the Gulf behind Arab nationalist goals.

Although Khomeini has attacked the Iranian left with almost as much ruthlessness as the Shah, the Arab left hopes to profit from Iranian efforts to destabilize Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia's eastern provinces. For Arabs, therefore, the left line and the nationalist line have diverged on the Iranian issue, and Iraq has in this sense moved to the "right." This is hardly the collaboration with Washington that Iranians and some Palestinians charge.

The U.S. policy is to try to profit from whatever instability and weakness the Arab sheikdoms exhibit, gaining military and political footholds each time a nervous sheik buys or begs for additional protection. Iraq is gambling that it can marshal the forces of Arab nationalism around this conflict and hold them together long enough to gain the confidence of the sheiks and the House of Saud. If Arab nationalism wins a round or two against the "Light of the Aryans," Baghdad is betting it will be strong enough to break free of the American ties on which the security of the sheiks is currently based.

If Washington counters by backing the Arabs' enemy in Teheran, it may find itself stuck with a loser for both the short and the long run. The failure of the hostage rescue mission in April demonstrated how weak American capability for military intervention in the region is. The first days of the Iraqi-Iranian fighting proved that no security system on earth can save the precious oil facilities of the Gulf from damage. The obvious lesson should be that political, not military, solutions are the only guarantees of reliable oil supply here.

Washington has been wedded for too long to the view that the only stable political solution in the Gulf is one underwritten by a strong Iran. It is evidently too soon for Washington to swap the Iranian strong man for an Iraqi one, and it distrusts any collective Arab solution sponsored by Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. At this point it is difficult to tell whether Washington's most recent moves—the dispatch of AWACS aircraft and other radar equipment to Dhahran and the attempt to assemble an Anglo-American naval flotilla at the Strait of Hormuz—are a genuine effort to limit the war at the head of the Gulf or a covert attempt to lure Gulf leaders out of the Iraqi entente and back under Washington's patronage. If the latter is true, the United States may be overlooking the pan-Arab interest in this war, and alienating more deeply than it suspects traditional U.S. allies in the Gulf.

CLAUDIA WRIGHT

NEXT WEEK: Richard Falk will provide another view of the Iraqi-Iranian war.

Claudia Wright is the Washington correspondent of the London New Statesman *and a frequent writer on Middle East affairs. She has visited Iraq several times.*

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VARIATIONS

CALVIN TRILLIN

What I've been most worried about lately is whether my sister, Sukey, would do something to embarrass me if I became President. I realize, of course, that there are people who believe that I have no serious chance at the Presidency, at least this time around. It is true that the rumor that buoyed the spirits of my supporters for a while—the rumor that a columnist on an established Midwestern weekly, the *Thursday Shopper* of Raytown, Missouri, planned to refer to me in his column as a "spoiler"—turned out to be premature. Since then, I'll admit, I have more or less stopped active campaigning, although I still pass a cutting remark about Phil Crane now and then just to keep in practice. Also, I have not abandoned the official complaint I filed with the Fair Campaign Practices Committee many months ago accusing John B. Connally of "unfair hair." I intend to see that one through. Still, I would be the first to admit that I'm a long shot.

The way I figure it, though, this is precisely the time to grapple with matters such as the embarrassment potential of my family and whether someone could make an issue out of past personal remarks made to me by my banker in the course of business ("Pull up your socks, Trillin!") and how one goes about arranging to have certain records of the Kansas City Board of Education destroyed without a trace. If a time comes when the Presidential nomination of a major party seems within my grasp, reporters will be swarming over Kansas City and the surrounding countryside to poke around at my family and my early years—nipping over to Topeka to see which word my cousin Keith from Salina missed in the finals of the Kansas State Spelling Bee ("hayseed"), driving up to St. Jo to go through the police reports on the time my Uncle Benny Daynofsky was struck down by a Pontiac GTO while planting tomatoes in his back yard, visiting Lincoln to make certain that there were no election irregularities when my cousin Neil was chosen head drum major of the University of Nebraska marching band, pumping old school chums to see if they happen to have saved some embarrassing souvenir like a Halloween picture of me costumed as Mary, Queen of Scots, trying to get the goods on my sister, Sukey.

If I made any attempt at that time to counsel old friends about putting certain incidents into perspective ("Sure, it was the funniest thing that happened all eighth-grade year, Eddie, but if you told that story to people who don't happen to understand the traditional place of farm animals in the humor of this region the way you and I do, well, there just might be some misunderstanding . . ."), some of those post-Watergate snoops would be certain to accuse me of trying to tidy up my background for campaign purposes. Even at this early date, some of them might read some fence-mending motives into the fact that I just dedicated a book to my sister—especially if they find out that the dedication originally read, "To my sister, Sukey Fox, in a first tentative step toward forgiving her for trying to throw me down the laundry chute in 1937."

Was I being overcautious? On the surface, after all, Sukey seems respectable enough. She has been married for twenty-five years to the same husband. She has raised three unindicted sons. It is true that she is a real estate agent, an occupation that the public tends to rank in trustworthiness only slightly higher than journalist, but her inability to overcome a lifelong compulsion toward total disclosure makes her one of those rare real estate agents who might inform the prospective buyers of the Cape Colonial Split-Level Ranch that the odd pinging noise from the cellar does indeed sound like a boiler self-destructing. Could I cast doubt on the patriotism of someone who has borne witness to some twenty-three hundred hours of Little League play? Did I think there was any chance of alcohol abuse by someone whose intake of strong drink is limited to a chocolate-marshmallow daiquiri every other New Year's Eve?

On the other hand, who can predict how someone will react to temptation? Sure, Sukey seems O.K. now, but the way I read Billy Carter's testimony he was a model citizen himself until the voters went and ruined his life by making his brother President. It may be that if Helen Gahagan Douglas had successfully countered her opponent's accusations that she was an agent of the Red Menace, Donald Nixon would now be a solvent and contented insurance adjuster in Anaheim, California. What if Sukey started getting offers to appear at shopping center openings and trade smart remarks with Bobby Riggs and Debbie Reynolds and Annette Funicello and that crowd? What if she started getting nibbles from *Hollywood Squares* and *Card Sharks*? How many of us could keep our heads under those circumstances? As it happens, Sukey has some time on her hands these days. Her youngest son, Stevie, left for college last year. (Stevie! Could it be that Stevie, forgetting all the Lego blocks I lavished on him, will embarrass me by organizing panty raids at the University of Kansas?) The real estate game is slow, now that the only way to get mortgage money from a bank is to stage a successful armed robbery. What if Sukey met some Libyans? What if Sukey met some Libyans with mortgage money? Before you know it, the pack would be after us. Sukeygate.

The shuttle shrinks would analyze the entire business in terms of Sukey's subconscious need to lash out—as Donald Nixon and Billy Carter lashed out—at an older brother who had picked on her as a child. Wait a minute! I'm her younger brother. I didn't try to throw her down the laundry chute; she tried to throw me down the laundry chute. Suddenly encouraged, I phoned Sukey in Kansas City.

"You wouldn't embarrass me if I became President, would you, Sukey?" I said, when she answered.

There was silence for a while on the other end of the line. Finally, Sukey said, "Sometimes I'm sorry you were too fat."

"Too fat to be President?"

"Too fat to fit down the laundry chute."

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LETTERS.

(Continued From Page 362)

on the Linda Lovelace transformation from sex-role actress to housekeeper and feminist heroine contains worthwhile points about the chosen focus of some feminists and their philosophies, and some interesting ideas are brought out by his references to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature.

However, if his purpose was to enlighten us and force us to consider the issues pressing women today in a historical fashion, was there no better issue to identify . . . no better way of articulating a criticism of contemporary feminist thinking . . . no better *reason* to criticize feminism and its leaders . . . no better way of treating the fears and questions in the minds of millions of women who must consider the effects of prostitution and pornography on their own minds and those of men? To imply that a feminist movement has fallen short of perfection because it does not live up to the literary insights of George Bernard Shaw and Daniel Defoe is to grossly ignore the complex and intelligent arguments that dominate any discussion of these issues. And these discussions are going on in *this* century.

The Nation prides itself on its reputation as a maverick journal of independent opinion. And it is sure that this article will draw the response that any good, controversial issue is due. But Neier straddles a fine line between stimulating controversy and bad judgment. Both can have a similar effect; one has a more honorable intent. The intent of his article seems only to be a wanton criticism of feminism, and from an uninformed viewpoint, for the territories of pornography and prostitution have been studied seriously by people who have a compelling interest in these issues.

I, as a feminist, do not ask for unanimity of opinion on any issue. And *The Nation* rarely promotes that. What I do ask, however, is that the issues not be considered in a vacuum of current discussion. *Karen Polk*

NEIER REPLIES

New York City

Linda Lovelace's importance derives from the way an important segment of the feminist movement is using her story. *Aryeh Neier*

KEEP KASTENMEIER

Washington

This is a year in which unprecedented amounts of money are being expended to oppose members of the Congress who have earned the enmity of the right. There are many claims, then, upon the generosity (and self-interest) of *The Nation*'s readers. May I call attention, however, to the re-election campaign of a public servant of large courage and great distinction?

Representative Robert Kastenmeier of Wisconsin faces a difficult battle. Kastenmeier has been in the forefront of so many battles since his election in 1958 that to enumerate them is to recall our recent history: civil and constitutional rights, environmental protection and the struggle for a rational foreign and military policy are prominent among them. His continued presence in the House, and in particular on the Interior and Judiciary committees (he is chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice), gives all of us a voice (and a vote) we sorely need.

Contributions (small ones are as welcome as large ones) can be sent to: Keep Kastenmeier in Congress, 10 South Carroll Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. *Norman Birnbaum*

CORRECTION

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid sometimes cause confusion about just who was who. This, unfortunately, happened in my article on the Consumers Solar hydrogen hydride process ["Somebody Doesn't Like Hy-Fuel," *The Nation*, Oct. 4]. My source incorrectly gave me the name of Robert Redford as one of the backers of the process. Instead, the sponsor in question was a member of Paul Newman's family. *Fred J. Cook*

LASER WARS

Missile Killers: The Hidden Arms Race

Completely overlooked in the present political campaign is the most pressing issue of our time: how to prevent a nuclear war that is becoming inevitable. The "debate" on defense issues between the major-party aspirants for the Presidency has become a strident quarrel over who will spend more on new weaponry. At least John Anderson has been able to slip in a few words against the MX, but aside from that, we have been treated to a stepped-up political nuclear arms race. Meanwhile, the military contractors who develop the new technology that seems the main determinant of our mindless nuclear policy and whose chief philosophy is Samuel Gompers's "More!" are busily hatching lethal new eggs.

One area of research, the implications of which have been widely ignored, is the drive to develop defenses against enemy missiles. Although antiballistic missiles are severely limited by a current U.S.-Soviet treaty, scientists are busily perfecting devices that will serve the same purpose, only better, and that could drastically destabilize the present nuclear equilibrium. Recently, for example, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown ordered full speed ahead on the development of space-based killer lasers, whose primary missions would be to protect U.S. reconnaissance satellites and, more ominously, destroy attacking Soviet missiles.

In the following article, which we offer as our contribution to the defense nondebate, Robert C. Aldridge surveys the entire range of such defensive technology, of which laser weapons represent only a part of the picture.

—The Editors

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ROBERT C. ALDRIDGE

Beware of generals bearing tin cups and pleading impoverished defense systems. One such Pentagon mendicant, Gen. James Hill, who is former commander of North American Air Defense (NORAD), was heard at the SALT II hearings last year bemoaning the deterioration of U.S. defenses against Soviet bombers and missiles. "It's a well-known fact that our radar systems and interceptor forces are old," said General Hill, "and our capabilities have diminished. . . . We have several programs on the books to correct these deficiencies. However, at present they are not adequately funded."

That last sentence was the pitch, designed to touch hawkish Congressional hearts and loosen purse strings. What General Hill modestly refers to as "several programs," however, is really a comprehensive blueprint for developing the whole spectrum of missile and bomber defenses, and it is well underway. The Pentagon is not only updating present systems, it is probing far into the future to discover exotic new approaches to this aspect of war. Consider, first, missile defense.

The former director of the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), Dr. George Heilmeier, once informed Congress that the Soviet Union could overcome a U.S. ballistic missile defense employing interceptors by saturating that defense with an increased number of warheads. He offered the legislators the tantalizing vision of a leak-proof ballistic missile defense that would be resistant to such saturation tactics. Dr. Heilmeier was referring to *directed-energy weapons*, of which the most prominent is the killer laser.

Robert C. Aldridge, an aerospace engineer, worked sixteen years designing submarine-launched ballistic missiles, MIRVs for Poseidon and MARVs for Trident. He is the author of two books: The Counterforce Syndrome *(Institute for Policy Studies) and* First Strike *(T-B-S Britannica, Japan).*

Lasers are highly concentrated beams of light with parallel photon energy. The name is an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. The stronger the stimulating source, the more concentrated the beam and the more destructive it is to matter. Focusing sunlight with a magnifying glass to char wood is a crude example of how highly concentrated light affects matter. In the area affected, the damaging energy applied by a killer laser surpasses that of a nuclear explosion.

In 1960 the first laser beam was fired and two years later DARPA was looking for military uses. The discovery of the flowing-gas laser in 1968 opened the door for high-energy (killer) lasers and by 1970 there were three types: gas dynamics, chemical, and electrical discharge. A demonstration at China Lake, California, in 1975 proved that killer lasers could cause structural damage to an airplane. In 1978 a laser prototype was tested against much smaller and faster antitank missiles with a reported high rate of success.

After the 1975 test, DARPA reoriented its stepped-up laser program toward small, pulsing chemical lasers with ultraprecise aiming and tracking schemes for deployment in space. Chemical lasers are particularly suited for space because they require no electrical energy, take advantage of the low temperatures to simplify cooling and release the highly toxic byproducts where they are unlikely to cause harm. In addition, the vacuum of space allows the beam to travel thousands of miles without being scattered; thus, the unique properties of a laser—its ability to precisely concentrate vast amounts of energy at extreme distances with the speed of light—can be fully exploited. Defense officials are now estimating that the United States can put a high-energy chemical laser in space within seven to ten years, according to *Aviation Week & Space Technology.*

Killer lasers carried by low-orbit satellites could destroy enemy missiles shortly after they are launched and before they loose their multiple warheads. In a recent speech, Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, a staunch advocate of developing space-based lasers, pointed out that approx-

DRAWINGS BY J.C SUARES

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imately three dozen killer lasers in low satellites could cover the entire globe and be capable of destroying every missile the Soviet Union launched. Each would be capable of firing nearly a thousand "shots."

Death rays made up of subatomic particles such as protons or electrons are another breed of directed-energy weapon which the Pentagon has studied off and on since 1960. These beams are analogous to a lightning bolt and have an advantage over terrestrial lasers in bad weather. They may also have a longer range in the atmosphere if the problem of beam scattering can be overcome. Such beams are, however, deflected by the earth's magnetic field, which makes it hard to aim them over long distances in space.

To overcome that problem, the Army is now pursuing research on a neutral particle beam which can be mounted in space to destroy ballistic missiles in flight. Originally called Sipapu (an American Indian name for "sacred fire"), but later renamed White Horse to avoid ethnic offense, this neutrally charged beam will not be affected by the earth's magnetic pull. The Air Force is also interested in White Horse for antisatellite warfare, and a small space-based nuclear reactor is being developed to provide the necessary power. In addition to that, the very precise pointing system being developed for the "civilian" satellite astronomy observatory will have military application in aiming particle beams and killer lasers.

Soviet scientists are also pursuing research on directed-energy weapons, and there have been numerous allegations that the Russians are ahead in that field. Defense Secretary Harold Brown put these arguments to rest, however, in his fiscal 1981 posture statement when he said, "Although the Soviets may be investigating the application of high-energy lasers and even charged particle beams . . . severe technical obstacles remain in the way of converting this technology into a weapon system that would have any practical capability against ballistic missiles."

As mentioned above, killer lasers are most effective shortly after the missiles have been launched. That is because the missiles are easier to hit than the multiple warheads they ultimately fire at the target. And in addition to destroying all the warheads with one blow, the missile would be blown up before the booster rockets push it to full speed, causing the debris to fall short of the United States, possibly on the enemy's own homeland.

Destroying hostile missiles with directed-energy weapons, however, is not the only aspiration of the Army's Ballistic Missile Defense Command. Work was started at the Kwajalein Atoll in 1977 on a flight test program, scheduled to get underway in late 1981, which will simulate interception of an enemy attack either while their missiles are in the boost phase or after the MIRVs (multiple individually targeted reentry vehicles) have been released but are still far out in space. The latter is called a "midcourse intercept." Since Kwajalein is the terminal end of the Pacific Missile Range, test missiles launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California can be used as targets for antimissile weapons.

Preparations at Kwajalein appear to be connected with the Army's top-secret Homing Interceptor Technology (HIT) program. From what little information is available, we know that the HIT warhead can be launched by existing rockets fired from the F-15 aircraft or from the ground. It is described as a nonnuclear, nonexplosive device less than a foot long, almost seven inches in diameter and weighing in the neighborhood of fourteen pounds. An infrared sensor guides the warhead as it maneuvers toward its target, at a relative speed of 27,000 miles per hour to destroy the missile by impact.

Homing interceptor technology dates back to at least 1961, when a space program called Blackeye was set up to design a device that would fire a swarm of metal pellets at a hostile satellite. It was also prior to 1969 that the BAMBI (Ballistic Missile Boost Intercept) program tested the possibility of intercepting enemy missiles early in flight while their rocket motors are still burning. Obviously, current programs are not recent ideas. Vought Corporation now has a contract to develop a HIT warhead for use against Soviet missiles.

But before enemy missiles can be shot out of the sky, they must be detected and tracked. Numerous programs address that aspect. When the Safeguard ABM site in North Dakota was shut down several years ago, the modern 2,700-mile-range phased-array radar was converted to track intercontinental missiles coming over the polar region from Siberia. It will also detect submarine-launched ballistic missiles fired from the Arctic and Hudson Bay regions. Added to that, the three Ballistic Missile Early Warning System radar stations in Alaska, Greenland and Britain are now being modernized for better discrimination and automation.

To warn against submarine-launched strategic missiles coming from the Atlantic or Pacific oceans, two new phased-array radars will soon replace the existing scanning-dish radars along the coasts. One is at Otis Air Force Base in Massachusetts and the other at Beal Air Force Base in California. Known as Pave Paws, these powerful radars will reach out 3,000 miles over both oceans. Complementing that is another phased-array radar at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, which is used primarily for space tracking but can also detect missile launches from submarines in the Southern Hemisphere.

Supplementing these comprehensive improvements and additions to ground-based radar installations, the United States also has three early-warning satellites with orbits synchronized to the earth's rotation so that they appear to stay over one spot on the equator. One hovers over the Indian Ocean to watch for intercontinental missile launches from the Soviet Union. The other two are posted above the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to spot ballistic missile launches from submarines. Each satellite is equipped with 2,000 infrared sensors to pick up the rocket motor's flame.

Satellite-borne systems with an even earlier warning capa-

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bility are in the experimental stage. One of these is the High Altitude Large Optics (HALO) program. Dr. Heilmeier claimed several years ago that DARPA has made a breakthrough in mosaic infrared detectors with integral data processing. This is the silicon technology used for pocket calculators and digital watches. Project HALO extends that application to computer chips with as many as 100,000 detectors per square inch of surface area. The resulting sensor with millions of detector cells is then fitted into the focal plane of an infrared telescope. Each detector stares at a single spot to give extreme sensitivity while all of them together survey a large area. HALO is envisioned as a replacement for existing early warning satellites in the late 1980s and will probably have an optical panel up to 100 feet across consisting of a variety of sensors. It will track a missile or warhead during the entire flight, not just while booster motors are burning. Experimental mosaic sensors sent aloft on rockets and high-flying aircraft have successfully tracked missiles fired between Vandenberg and the Kwajalein Atoll.

Many of these antiballistic missile devices being tested could have an impact on the ABM treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union—especially space-based lasers. Under the treaty, the development and testing of space-based, sea-based or air-based ABM systems or their individual components are forbidden. The President's *Fiscal Year 1980 Arms Control Impact Statements* points out that "Almost certainly, directed-energy-related ABM systems . . . would not be permitted without an amendment to the treaty." Thus their development could require abrogation of the treaty and accelerate the arms race.

Now let us take a quick look at air defense. In 1974, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger de-emphasized defense measures against enemy bombers. Active Air Force interceptor squadrons then dwindled to six and the Army's elaborate network of Nike-Hercules surface-to-air missiles was shut down (although development continued full steam on the new Patriot antiaircraft missile—ostensibly for use by NATO in Europe).

At the close of 1976, however, a shift in defense strategy occurred, and Air Force officials announced a new $2.5 billion program to modernize antibomber defense. The Air Force's 1978 budget contained a $30 million down payment on a six-year plan to purchase 170 new fighter planes to replace their twenty-year-old F-106 interceptors. Air Force officials warned that we can expect to pay more for air defense in the future.

Bomber warning systems are also being refurbished. Existing Distant Early Warning Line (DEWLINE) radars are being replaced with automated stations that require fewer operators. Some new ones have also been added. In addition, forty-five long-range radar stations operated jointly by the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration—located in Alaska, Canada and the continental United States—are being upgraded and automated. And the first over-the-horizon radars on each coast will be operational in the early 1980s to detect approaching bombers and air-breathing cruise missiles while they are still a thousand miles at sea. Finally, a new fleet of E-3A advanced-warning aircraft will replace the ten radar planes currently operating in the gaps between DEWLINE stations.

That is only the beginning in bomber warnings. DARPA is developing a new satellite-borne sensor code-named Teal Ruby, which also uses a mosaic pattern of a quarter-million infrared detectors to sense the heat from jet engines. The first Teal Ruby satellite was scheduled to go into orbit during December 1981 but that will probably slide into 1983. A similar sensor has already been tested in high-flying aircraft, however.

At first glance, it appears that being able to defend against enemy missiles and bombers would be highly desirable. But a leak-proof defense negates the deterrent philosophy by depriving the opponent of his ability to retaliate. It is also an essential element of a first-strike strategy because if the United States had such a defense it could attack the Soviet Union with impunity. Ironically, at a time of international crisis, when tensions are high on both sides, a U.S. first-strike capability could impel the Russians to fire their missiles before they lose them. For that reason, a comprehensive air and missile defense is extremely destabilizing.

All of this ambitious activity belies General Hill's allegation that bomber and missile defenses are being neglected. But money is needed to keep these elaborate weapons contracts afloat, and diverting more of the taxpayers' hard-earned bucks into corporate pocketbooks seems to be the real motive behind General Hill's remarks. The profits from weapons contracts have always been the main push behind the arms race, and it is no different in this case. Anticipating it and understanding it, however, give the antimilitarist forces an opportunity to act. □

URANIUM COLONY

The Illegal Exploitation Of Namibia

A. W. SINGHAM

Namibia possesses a considerable nest egg in the form of mineral wealth which could have given it a solid start in life as an independent nation. Instead, these riches—uranium primarily, but also diamonds, zinc, copper and possibly oil—have made South Africa all the more determined to continue its illegal possession. For Namibia has become a target of exploitation by some of the world's largest transnational corporations, contrary to specific prohibitions in a United Nations decree. In collusion with South Africa, and with the tacit blessing of their own governments, these multinationals are preventing

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Namibia from fulfilling the independent destiny envisioned for it by the United Nations.

The intransigence of South Africa has been abundantly clear in the delaying tactics it has employed to forestall free elections in Namibia and gain legitimacy for its own puppet regime. It was most recently evinced in a letter dated August 29 from Pieter Willem Botha, South African Prime Minister, to U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, informing him in no uncertain terms that South Africa would not allow the United Nations to supervise elections in Namibia and seriously questioning the integrity of the Secretary General and the entire United Nations family. The South African Prime Minister was possibly buoyed by the statement of a Ronald Reagan adviser in Pretoria recently that a Reagan administration would adopt a new policy toward the republic. South Africa is banking its hopes on the possible election of Reagan in the United States and the continuing support of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Britain to underwrite the continuity of its apartheid regime and its domination of Namibia. Botha's letter should destroy any illusions the Western nations have that South African policy can be changed through their good offices.

The scope of foreign mining operations in Namibia is especially alarming because of the brazen violation of United Nations Decree No. 1 for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia, which was adopted by the Council for Namibia on September 27, 1974, and by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 1974. The decree forbids persons or corporations to "take, extract, mine, process, refine, use, sell, export, or distribute any natural resource, whether animal or mineral, situated or found to be situated within the territorial limits of Namibia" without the consent of the U.N. Council for Namibia, on pain of "seizure and forfeiture" by the council or its representative.

Namibia, it should be recalled, has been the responsibility of the international community for the past sixty years, ever since the League of Nations, in May 1919, ordered South Africa to protect the territory and prepare its people for independence. South Africa flouted this mandate, and in October 1966 the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution terminating South Africa's control and appointed a Council for Namibia to administer the area until independence. After thirteen years, this council is still not recognized by South Africa, which continues to defy openly the decision of the world community. The General Assembly eventually recognized the organization known as SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) as the legitimate and authoritative spokesman for the Namibian people and insisted that South Africa negotiate with it. The Security Council also authorized the Secretary General to establish an elaborate machinery to hold elections in that territory. But South Africa conducted fraudulent elections whose results have never been accepted by the international community.

Testimony before the Council for Namibia this summer provided further insights into the real motives of South Africa and other Western powers. It was revealed that Namibia's economy is now dominated by white, foreign-owned interests, based largely in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, West Germany, the Netherlands and Canada. They are involved in the exploitation of its natural resources, especially in the mining of mineral deposits. Experts from around the world documented the enormous scope of uranium mining. The territory holds some of the largest uranium reserves in the world, which, if fully developed, would make Namibia the third largest producer of uranium, after the United States and Canada. Namibian uranium is being extracted, processed, transported and sold, in violation of U.N. Decree No. 1, by transnational corporations with the support of their respective governments and the collusion of the Government of South Africa. The main uranium mine in Namibia is operated by Rossing Uranium Ltd. Last year, it nearly reached its full production capacity of 4,535 metric tons of uranium oxide per annum.

The rights to develop the Rossing mine were acquired by the British-based transnational Rio Tinto Zinc (see following article). Rio Tinto Zinc now owns almost half the mine, which in 1979 earned nearly $200 million from exports of uranium oxide. Other large shares in the mine are held by a Canadian subsidiary of Rio Tinto Zinc, Rio Algom, and a French subsidiary, Total. In addition, the largely South African Anglo-American Corporation, America's Union Carbide and West Germany's Urangesell-

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schaft have been involved in extensive prospecting for uranium in Namibia. Other transnationals have invested in South Africa's electrical and technical industries, which utilize Namibian uranium. For example, Allis-Chalmers, which helped to develop the Oak Ridge reactor, is the major contractor for the construction of the first nuclear reactor for the South African Fundamental Research Reactor. U.S. Steel and Gulf Oil, along with West Germany's STEAG and Siemens and France's conglomerate, Framatome, have sold technology and component parts necessary for nuclear processing to South Africa. Many of these same countries have rhetorically dissociated themselves from the apartheid regime of South Africa and have spoken out against nuclear proliferation.

One of the major myths about transnational corporations is that they cannot be controlled by the public sector or by government. But in detailed testimony and a book (*The Nuclear Axis*, written with Zdenek Cervenka), Barbara Rogers has argued convincingly that it is virtually impossible for transnationals to function in any country without the collaboration of their governments. "The companies which are involved are preeminently government-controlled companies," she explained. Rio Tinto Zinc, for example, is closely tied to the British Government. "It also has strong connections with the West German nuclear industry which, in turn, is very much under the control of the Federal German Government. It has links in Canada and other parts of the world which it has used to create international linkages with this illegal venture in Namibia."

French expert Louise Trusell, among others, told the council that since 1978 France has become the center for the distribution of Namibian uranium throughout Europe. Two weekly flights "involving South African Airways and the French company, the Union des Transports Aeriens (U.T.A.)" carry some thirty-three tons each of uranium oxide for European nuclear plants through major French airports. In accounting for this transfer, Trusell quoted the vice-director of U.T.A. who stated, "The United Nations Council for Namibia is not recognized by France. As far as the company is concerned, there is a formal agreement by the French authorities for this transport." Another French expert argued that because of the clandestine nature of the uranium shipments, the likelihood of accidents was considerable and posed a threat to the health and safety of European peoples.

The uranium hearings last summer put the Council for Namibia in a difficult position. The hearings were closely followed by U.N. members, especially those from the West, who are quite concerned about the various charges made against them, as are the various transnational corporations who were invited to make presentations at the hearing but saw fit not to attend. The South African Government's only response was, "Many developing countries would envy the so-called exploitation that has taken place in South West Africa/Namibia under South Africa's administration. This so-called exploitation has led to the development of a modern and comprehensive infrastructure, sophisticated medical services, education, employment and a substantial increase in the standard of living and one of the highest per capita G.N.P.s in Africa."

On the basis of the evidence presented to them and the anticipated replies, the council must now act to fulfill its obligation to the General Assembly. The council should insist that the Namibian question be considered in the coming General Assembly session and that a resolution be passed on the uranium issue which calls for compensation to be paid to the independent government of Namibia for the plunder of these resources. The assembly could also consider the call for the internationalization of the mining operations under U.N. jurisdiction until the independence question is resolved. Namibia is one area where the international community can cooperate and bring about a settlement. In the final analysis, what is at stake is larger than the independence of Namibia. It involves two international concerns—the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and putting an end to a racist regime.

The nations of the world have over the years accepted a nuclear-weapons ideology which has, in fact, legitimized the possession and use of nuclear weapons. The power and might of nations is now being measured by their nuclear-weapons capacity. This legitimizing process has allowed a few "crazy states," as an Israeli theoretician has characterized them, to obtain and develop nuclear weapons. The Indian diplomat, Dinesh Singh, is clearly correct when he suggests that a few nations with nuclear weapons are holding the bulk of humanity in hostage. It would indeed be a tragic irony if the United Nations helped the "terrorist" state of South Africa to join this band by not putting a stop to its privileged and illegal access to Namibian uranium. □

R.T.Z.'s Wonderful Multinational Money Machine

JANE MARGOLIES

Rio Tinto Zinc (R.T.Z.), the British company mining uranium in Namibia in defiance of the United Nations, has investments all over the map. With an annual turnover exceeding that of many countries, R.T.Z. is not unlike an importing-exporting nation. What's striking about this mining giant is its close ties with the British Government and Crown. Lord Carrington was a director before becoming Foreign Secretary in the Thatcher

Jane Margolies, a recent graduate of Cornell University, was an intern at The Nation. *She now is working as a community organizer for the Citizens Alliance of the New York Public Research Group.*

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Cabinet, and Lord Charteris, another director, served as secretary to the Queen (who is rumored to hold shares in R.T.Z.). Prominent members of the opposition Labor Party also sit on the company board of directors. Relations between the Government and R.T.Z. are so chummy that the British *Daily Telegraph* observed that as well as supplying metals and other resources, R.T.Z. could furnish a coalition government.

R.T.Z.'s practice of acquiring influence by recruiting in government ranks has strengthened the company's ties with the state nuclear industry. In 1968, Alistair Frame resigned as head of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (U.K.A.E.A.) and joined R.T.Z. Two years ago he became chief executive of R.T.Z., thereby reinforcing its connection with the state agency. The U.K.A.E.A. reportedly called on R.T.Z. to "find uranium and save civilization." Today, R.T.Z. is operating mines in Canada and Australia, as well as in Namibia, and has an effective monopoly over Britain's uranium contracts.

Besides uranium, Britain relies on R.T.Z. for copper, iron ore, zinc, nickel, borate, bauxite and other metals. According to officials in the Department of Trade and Industry, if there is a shortage of these resources, someone just gets on the phone and asks R.T.Z. to take care of it. An article in *The Times* of London went so far as to call it "almost patriotic" to own shares in R.T.Z., whose "own particular brand of colonialism secures for Britain the raw materials it must have to remain one of the world's leading trading and industrialized nations." Indeed, company directors consider themselves patriotic. "We tried from the start to build up a chain of natural resources in the Commonwealth," explained one of R.T.Z.'s first directors.

The early leadership quickly learned that the company could benefit from mergers and joint ventures, since risks were high and capital requirements substantial. R.T.Z. itself is the product of a merger of the Rio Tinto Company and the Consolidated Zinc Corporation. Before the merger in 1962, the Rio Tinto Company had begun extracting Palabora copper in South Africa, and copper and uranium in Canada through its Canadian subsidiary, Rio Algom. Meanwhile, Consolidated Zinc had discovered a huge bauxite deposit in Queensland. After the merger, Hamersley, the massive iron ore mine in Western Australia, fell into R.T.Z.'s lap. Additional mergers and joint ventures increased and diversified R.T.Z.'s investments. Borax (Holdings), an R.T.Z. subsidiary which controls approximately 70 percent of the world borate market, has a 73 percent stake in United States Borax. Exxon and R.T.Z. currently are looking for the opportunity to work together in a joint venture, according to an R.T.Z. director.

To finance its operations, R.T.Z. marshals capital from around the world, securing loans with future output. The company increasingly borrows American dollars from Morgan Stanley, First Boston and Model Roland Company. The Bank of America heads two syndicates of twenty-seven British, European and Canadian banks underwriting the cost of the Bougainville copper mine in New Guinea.

Enlisting the support of governments before undertaking new projects is another R.T.Z. strategy. South Africa, for instance, was a willing partner in the exploitation of Namibia's uranium. In May, R.T.Z. signed a contract with the Government of Panama for the development of the Cerro Colorado copper deposits, located about 160 miles west of Panama City. The Panamanian Government initiated negotiations with R.T.Z.—for years it had wanted to bring Cerro Colorado into production, but lacked the requisite technology and capital. R.T.Z. now holds 49 percent of the shares in the operating company for the project, with Codemin, the state mining agency, holding the remaining 51 percent. R.T.Z.'s practice of obtaining the cooperation of governments and bringing in local shareholders has paid off in the near absence of expropriations. R.T.Z. even has the U.S. Senate on its side. The Senate version of the Alaska lands bill under consideration in the House would give United States Borax rights to the Quartz Hill molybdenum deposit in Alaska and would remove the 150,000 acres surrounding it from Federal protection.

So far, R.T.Z. looks almost too good to be true. It's a growing company able to raise all the money it wants. Its investments are in basic materials, and lucky discoveries of byproducts—gold at Palabora and molybdenum at Lornex—have meant even greater profits. But along with the gains, there have been losses. One was its Rhodesian investment. Since Zimbabwe declared independence, R.T.Z. has been unable to exercise control over its properties there. One day R.T.Z. may face the same situation in Namibia. The new Government of Papua New Guinea has already dealt R.T.Z. a severe blow. In 1969, the company began mining copper at Bougainville, which was then a United Nations trust administered by Australia. The original contract with the Queensland government gave R.T.Z. a tax holiday until 1975 and allowed the company to write off capital expenditures. In 1974, however, the new government rewrote the contract. The new one makes R.T.Z. pay taxes, reducing shareholder earnings by one-quarter. R.T.Z. also has been tangled in two lawsuits in the United States. Its companies were involved in an action brought by the T.V.A., and in 1976, Westinghouse Electric started antitrust proceedings against R.T.Z. and twenty-nine other companies, charging

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they had formed a uranium cartel which boosted the price of the metal sixfold. In both cases, R.T.Z. challenged jurisdiction and denied liability.

R.T.Z. also rejects charges that it has been "raping" the natural resources of countries like Namibia and Papua New Guinea. The company points out that its activities contribute to Namibia's development by providing employment, training and housing at the Rossing uranium mine. This is questionable, given the grossly discriminatory wage rate and miserable working and living conditions at Rossing. In Papua New Guinea R.T.Z. went ahead with the Bougainville project despite strong opposition from the Aborigines, who did not want their quiet agricultural life disrupted. When the R.T.Z. bulldozers arrived in the small village of Rorovana, accompanied by riot police, the villagers lined up in front of the bulldozers and refused to budge. The police went into action, clubbing and tear-gassing them.

Like Namibia, Papua New Guinea will never be able to undo the damage to its land and peoples. Polluted air and rivers, depleted mineral reserves, barren land and powerless peoples are the price of R.T.Z.'s patriotism. □

STRAIGHT VS. GAY ART

Statues Have Free Speech Too

ARYEH NEIER

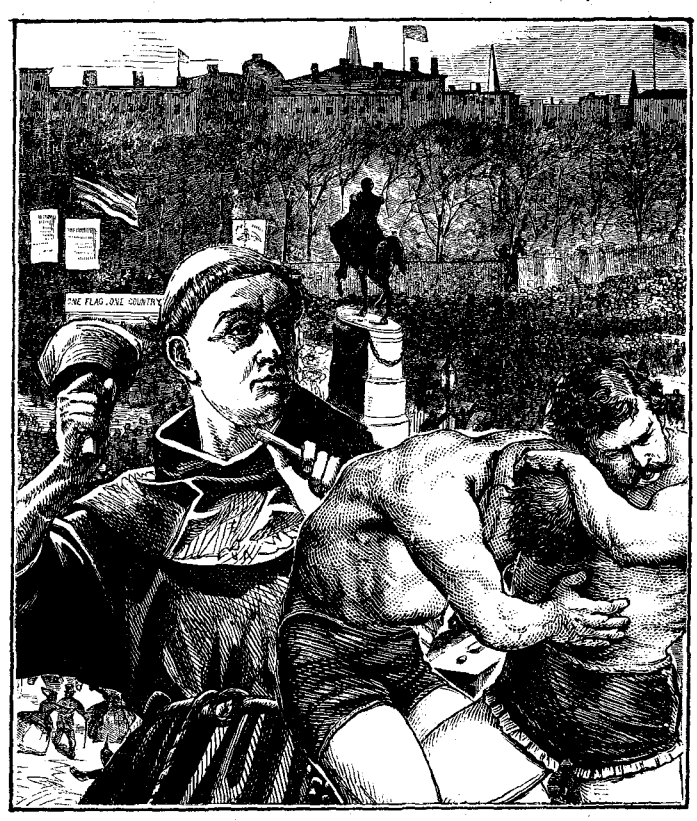
The apartment I have occupied for the last fifteen years in a high-rise building in New York City's Greenwich Village looks out over a small triangle of asphalt paving and greenery known as Christopher Park. When I first moved there, my young son occasionally played in the park. Children no longer play there, however, because its paved area (the greenery is protected by a high fence of iron palings) is a hangout for derelicts. What was once a neighborhood amenity is now a blight.

Recently, many of my neighbors have gotten angry about Christopher Park, though not because of the derelicts. A far more heinous threat looms. An organization known as the Mariposa Foundation proposes to donate to New York City a sculpture by George Segal, probably the best-known American figurative artist, to be placed in the now desolate paved area of the park. I have received a lot of phone calls from my neighbors denouncing me for speaking out in favor of accepting this gift.

As the callers make plain, the reason they are upset is the sculpture's theme. It consists of two life-size homosexual couples: the females seated next to each other on a park bench, one's hand resting on the other's knee; the males standing a few feet away, one's hand lightly touching the other's back. I have only seen pictures of the sculpture, but it seems to me a particularly fine example of Segal's work, energetic and witty. A sculpture in a park showing ordinary people sitting and standing in an ordinary way is a surprise, and a delightful contrast to the usual statues of generals standing at attention on pedestals. We barely see those generals even when we look right at them because they are such clichés.

The Mariposa Foundation, a recently created gay-rights organization headed by Dr. Bruce Voeller, former director of the National Gay Task Force, chose Christopher Park as the location for the Segal sculpture. For anyone familiar with the gay movement in the United States, the choice is obvious. Across the street is the site of the Stonewall Inn (now a restaurant which bakes the best bagels in New York City—therefore the world), celebrated by gays as the birthplace of their movement because it is where gays first resisted police harassment. Since that incident eleven years ago, gay-rights demonstrations have been held in Christopher Park and gay-rights parades often form there to march across the city. Christopher Street, which runs along the Stonewall Inn side of the park, is widely known as an area where gays promenade in the evening; a few of the many attractive shops on the street and some of the bars and restaurants cater especially to gays; the street has even given its name to a leading gay magazine.

In general, the part of Greenwich Village where I live has responded well to the influx of gays. On the few occasions when there has been trouble, it is usually because young toughs from elsewhere have arrived in packs intent on confronting the gays. I know of no recent difficulties with the residents, however. These days, even the police from the



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nearby precinct house seem to get on reasonably well with the gays. As for the shopkeepers on Christopher Street and its environs, they are beneficiaries of gay consumerism and, accordingly, seem enthusiastic about the development of the neighborhood. Under the circumstances, therefore, I was not prepared for the stir caused by the proposal to commemorate the birth of the gay movement with a sculpture in Christopher Park by one of America's leading artists.

Leaving aside emotional outbursts, the argument against the sculpture repeated most frequently is that it does not represent the whole community. A special interest group, it is said, should not be celebrated by a permanent memorial in a public place.

Some of those making this argument point out that Christopher Park already has a sculpture which, they say, fits their criterion of representativeness. It is a statue of Gen. Philip Sheridan, mounted on the usual pedestal and all but obscured by the trees in the fenced area of the park. An organization known as "Friends of Greenwich Village" and describing itself as "an ad hoc coalition of community leaders and block associations united in opposition to the Segal statue in Christopher Park" has circulated a letter asserting that "The majestic General Sheridan Statue commemorates the struggles of all Americans—particularly appropriate in Greenwich Village, the Mother of many social movements and ethnic migrations." This is nonsense. General Sheridan has been dead long enough so that I can't get excited about a memorial to him, but he is hardly a representative of "the struggles of all Americans." Indian fighter and adviser to the Prussian Army during the Franco-German War, Sheridan distinguished himself during our own Civil War as an early practitioner of the scorched-earth policy, destroying the homes and farms of civilians in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. As Bruce Catton recounts, "Sheridan methodically began the work of devastation, turning a garden spot into a smoking desert."

It could be argued persuasively, of course, that a sculpture of two peaceful gay couples is more representative of the community in which Christopher Park is located than a statue of a general who pioneered in laying waste to the countryside. But it is not on grounds of representativeness that I favor accepting the gift of the Segal sculpture. I favor it because it is a vital work of art, its esthetic interest only enhanced by the tensions created by the proposal to place it in Christopher Park, where it would be simultaneously representative and unrepresentative.

The demand that art must be representative of the whole community or must be universally accepted, of course, was not invented by my Greenwich Village neighbors vociferously opposing the Segal sculpture. Although my neighbors are not totalitarians, their argument is reminiscent of that used in totalitarian states to condemn any work of art that does not represent the whole community or that breaks with convention and, therefore, appeals only to a small audience. A totalitarian state maintains its power by dealing with its people as a mass. Even such ostensibly apolitical art as abstract painting or plotless ballet is denounced and censored because it lacks mass appeal. The repression such works elicit suggests that there is no such thing as genuinely nonpolitical art just as there is no such thing (as George Orwell argued) as genuinely nonpolitical literature. Works of art and literature that establish special rapport between their sponsors, their creators and limited audiences challenge the control of the state. Understanding this, totalitarian states rigidly limit artistic expression, insisting that themes must be broadly representative and that forms must be universally comprehensible. The consequence is that little of artistic or literary vitality is produced except by artists and writers who defy the state. Most good artists and good writers in totalitarian states become political rebels.

Of course, the Segal sculpture is overtly political. Its permanence—great care has been taken to make it vandal-proof—and its proposed placement in a public park suggest that the gay movement is not a passing phenomenon and that it enjoys official sanction. Because it is a work of great vitality, its political significance is all the greater. It has the potential to strengthen the bonds that unite the movement that it celebrates.

In retrospect, I should not have been surprised by the furor aroused by the proposal to place the Segal sculpture in Christopher Park. Despite the apparent acceptance of the gay movement in Greenwich Village, many of my neighbors wish it would go away, and particularly that it would go away from their neighborhood. The Segal sculpture in Christopher Park would symbolize that it is here to stay. Curiously, an inferior work of art might have aroused less opposition and, perhaps, would have been accepted more readily. □

People

(Continued From Front Cover)

men and women have realized the dream is corrupt. Success doesn't equate with salvation.

In my travels I spoke with people on farms, in kitchens, in saloons, at racetracks, on work sites. Disenchantment reigns supreme. And even though there is hate for the manipulative sectors, people have no hope that such sectors are going to reform. There is no political savior in their wings. The suspicion and the anarchy are so prevalent that one had to look up from one's notes to check that the farmer or mill worker talking wasn't Abbie Hoffman. The message is that there are no leaders; only the people can pull it back together. Here is what some of those people are saying.

De Witt Gilpin was born the son of a carpenter. When the Depression played havoc with his home life, he hit the road. He was 19, and he kicked around at various jobs till he found a vocation—labor organizing. He has stuck with it all his adult life, sometimes winning a union, other times a bunk in a jail cell.

He is witty, low-keyed and can be granted the mantle of philosopher. This designation is not lost on Illinois working

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people. His advice is sought out. One morning when we talked in his kitchen, Polly Connelly, who works for General Motors, was there seeking his counsel. She is an attractive woman in her 30s who went from the college antiwar movement to the labor movement. She looks very much like Shirley MacLaine.

Gilpin: "The working class? Hell, government has made the working class disappear by fiat. By using economic indicators, they have decreed everyone is middle class. It's a nice gambit.

"I see a lot of antilabor sentiment. It comes from big business, big government, and now you even see it in the movies. Films such as *F.I.S.T.* and *Blue Collar* give fuel to those who are against labor. The worst part is that they are cleverly done.

"There is a myth that labor's wages drive up inflation. What's missed here is that prices always go up first, and wages only follow. Those outside labor have no sympathy for the movement anymore. Only the membership is loyal, because they realize the benefits they have accrued from it.

"Of course, labor is at fault, too. We have failed to build bridges to minority groups, as the old C.I.O. did. Too much of labor is in cahoots with big business and big government. When the government subsidizes so much of the building trades, how can you expect them to come down on big government? And when it is disclosed that pension funds [of the Teamsters] are tied up in Las Vegas and deals with banks, how can you rationalize that to your workers?

"Maybe the failure is that we *have* become too middle class. In the old days 'labor leaders' were forced to live with the workers because none of us had a pot to piss in. Today, a kid comes out of a fairly prosperous home where college is attainable, and it's hard to explain to him what it was like. Hell, I was a wild kid, a tramp organizer. The movement was a home to a kid like me.

"Great leaders like [Harry] Bridges have died, and as far as politicians go, forget it. Carter is now into foreign policy, which is the device of all scoundrels, and many labor leaders were to the right of the State Department on the war. Franklin Roosevelt once said that if he worked in a factory, he'd join a union. You wouldn't get a politician to say that today."

Polly: "I started out in the Student Peace Union at Indiana University. I realized, though, that many movements are elitist in nature. I came to labor because, as we used to say, 'That is the point of production.' If things were going to change, you had to start with the people. I was the first woman in Chicago's Janitors Union, and I brought seven women into that union. Even now with the E.R.A., people are more impressed with working women coming out for it than with movie stars and Carter."

Gilpin: "What women have to realize is that the E.R.A. is connected to the social fabric. The opponents of the E.R.A. are better politicians than the advocates. The advocates should realize that to get the E.R.A. passed, they have to join forces with other groups who are trying to achieve something."

Polly: "Too many times the middle class is sympathetic only to the minorities and the definable poor. That's a hangup from the 1960s, when colleges were in the vanguard of the left. They saw the working class as being beneath them. It's that goddamn elitist notion that surfaced in the McGovern movement. [McGovern's campaign manager, Gary Hart, said they would win without labor.]

"What the E.R.A. forces should do is join forces with the backers of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill. That would be a powerful coalition."

Gilpin: "You can't win around negatives. Or let's say you can do it once. Carter did that by coming off as anti-politician. Now he is in power and is the politician. So it's up to him to halt inflation and do something about unemployment. We have 20 percent of our people stagnating. You realize we will always have bigotry as long as the Government is not committed to a program of full employment.

"So now Carter is trying to recoup by rekindling the cold war. Playing China off against Russia is a dangerous trick. It's reminiscent of backing the Nazis against the Bolsheviks. Carter is reckless in this: He won't get away with it this time. He's the politician now."

Neither Connelly nor Gilpin sees saviors on the horizon, only the hard work of coalescing fragmented groups. Is there any hope? Both mentioned a bumper sticker cropping up sporadically in the Midwest. It simply says: "America on Strike."

Frank Vahaly is a 36-year-old coal miner who works and lives with his wife and twin daughters in Bentleyville, Pennsylvania. We talked when he got off work from his midnight-to-8 A.M. shift at the Bethlehem Mine. He is muscular and blond, an aging high school football player.

"My two brothers also work in the mines. I'd rather work in construction—it's a helluva lot healthier. But that work is hard to find.

"Oh, I can make around $16,000 for forty to forty-eight hours a week. Some guys make $25,000, but you have to live there, and I don't live there. Sunday, I don't work—it's the Sabbath [Vahaly is Catholic]. If you don't work on your idle day, the company tries to make you feel as if you're stopping the country. On Friday night I like to go out and get a good buzz on, and Saturday I wash the car and spend the day with the kids. Look, if it gets tight, you do without.

"Besides, it's dangerous work. My brother Andy broke his back in a cave-in, and a cribbing block hit me years back, and I needed a nerve transplant in my elbow to get my hand to function again. And then there's the dust.

"Most of the old-timers who've retired have black lung. They can't walk very far, or you hear them breathing heavily just getting up and down. I've been working outside for a while now, and I can feel the difference in my chest."

His wife, Bea, interjects: "I can tell the difference. He

Joe Flaherty, who worked as a longshoreman for thirteen years, is the author of Managing Mailer, Fogarty & Co. *and* Chez Joey, *all published by Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.*

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used to cough all night and spit black phlegm. I worked in hospitals, and when they do autopsies on miners, their lungs crumble like burned wood."

Frank: "When X-rays show you have a touch of black lung, you have the right to switch to another job. But the company makes it so unpleasant for you, most of the guys retire.

"Government inspectors never follow up on mine violations. They hardly ever collect fines. If they did, it would be in the millions, and they wouldn't be so apt to let these conditions go. Besides, with that money the Government could hire more inspectors. But it's a living, and what else am I going to do? Working in a mill is the same damn thing.

"The country? I thought Carter would be better than he is. I voted for him. Ford just magnified what Nixon did. Nixon was the biggest rip-off artist of all time. If I stuck up a gas attendant, I would get eleven-and-a-half to twenty-two, guaranteed. And that's without a weapon.

"Nixon steals a couple hundred thousand for his house and lies like hell, and they don't even smack his fingers. He gets to keep his law license and retire gracefully.

"Carter is like the rest. Nobody looks out for the little people. What the hell do people who make seven or eight grand without home relief do? He plays along with the utilities and the oil business, which has been unfair to the public. It's all big business.

"Like now, with the recession. They're starting to lay off. But what in the hell are you going to do? In November we have no choice again. I don't care for Reagan, but Carter sure hasn't shown me much.

"He's sure screwed up the hostages. They should have been out of Iran a long time ago. When he realized he couldn't talk to those people, he should have gone over there and gotten our people out. He tried too late with too little.

"I don't understand this business of little countries shitting all over us. But I don't want you to misunderstand me on this. I don't think we should go around beating the hell out of everyone around the world—no way!—but when people get on your case, you get them the hell off.

"You know, I won't let them donate a dollar for campaign contributions from my taxes. If they need money, let them run a raffle or something—I don't care. But not with my buck.

"You know when this country will change? When the people change and become like they were thirty years ago. We have to get rid of our greed. There's greed at the top and right down here in the mine shafts. If we all change, we might get better people running for office again. People who want to do something, who enjoy getting something done.

"I remember in the old days how we would get together and dig out a basement for a neighbor. The neighbor would put up a couple of cases of beer and his wife would cook a great meal. We loved it. Now everything is five and six dollars an hour. Hell, we loved each other so much we used to have wedding parties that went for four or five days at the groom's parents' house.

"Maybe it's keeping up with the Joneses. You don't want your kids to live your hardship, and you overcompensate by buying things for them. You put up a front. You get independent, and you lose something wonderful."

Joe Romano is a Chicago machinist who has worked at his trade for fifteen years. Recently, he won election as president of his local of the United Steelworkers of America. He is a disciple of maverick Ed Sadlowski, who ran for national office and lost. Romano lives in a newly bought house with his Latino wife, Jackie, and his seven daughters. The house is an old but serviceable one that he went into hock to buy. "Where the hell are you going to find an apartment to house a brood like mine?" he said.

"The problem with the auto industry," Romano said, "is that they're lacking vision. The old work won't do anymore. Now everyone is into fabricated parts. Not only are they closing down plants in Ohio, they closed down a town.

"At my plant you can make decent dollars if you work seventy hours a week. But seventy hours is not the answer—it's a horseshit concept of life."

Jackie: "That's why I work. Everything I buy is on sale. I try to run the house and let Joe take care of the bills."

Joe: "It's not a question of getting ahead. It would be a victory to break even. I can't stay even.

"At least the union has changed for the best. Our district used to be run like a Gestapo meeting till Ed won the local election. We had conferences and nobody spoke. You couldn't carry notebooks or briefcases into the meeting. You might be taking notes or carrying a tape recorder. Hell, we didn't have an open election in twenty-five years until Eddie ran.

"All politics is the same, national or union. It's run on power and fear. An independent tries to run on a moral issue and the power brokers threaten his bread and butter. Some poor sonuvabitch has five kids, and what is he going to do—put himself out on a limb? Till we do away with the fear factor and recriminations, we are never going to have free elections in anything.

"Do you understand what I'm getting at? The concept of divide and conquer. The ploy is to get the American worker to dissociate himself from the masses once the worker gets a little affluent. They grant you status titles. [He laughs sardonically.] Garbagemen get elevated to 'Sanitary Engineers.' The trick is to make us insular—and maybe we are.

"Government is the same. In politics we are the only people in the world who have not made progress. Think of what they get away with. The Democrats are known as the blue-collar party, and the only people who run for office are millionaires.

"The idea of the political system is to make it too sophisticated to challenge. It was the same in the union's national elections. They Red-baited the shit out of us, and it worked in places like the South. Man, the South is a different country.

"So what do you do? Well, you can't challenge anything from the top. That takes an immense amount of money.

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People get defeated by awesome tasks, and that's what the big shots count on. What real choices are we given in national elections? Usually, the lesser of two evils. That's how Carter made it, and now we don't know if he *was* the lesser. He's alienated me, my fellow workers. As far as I can see, he's alienated everyone.

"November? Hell, when I think about it, I get a lump in my throat. Oh Christ, we're not left with too many alternatives, are we? But what the hell is new? I don't want to think about that misery till I have to do it.

"I was ambivalent about the hostage thing. I was happy he finally tried something, but boy, that was a helluva blunder on the escape. Why did he wait so long? Man, there comes a time when you got to shit or get off the pot.

"Carter is not as dumb as he seems. He got a million miles out of milking the hostage issue during the primaries. It was the best thing that could have happened to him. It took everyone's mind off his record. Sitting pat was the best thing he could have done. We have a cynical saying in the union movement—you can't lose if you don't do it. A lot of union leaders play it the same way Carter did.

"So the thing to do is to develop people in local areas. You can't come in and tell other people how to live. They just say, 'Who is the hotshot from Chicago?' If you can't see past the tip of your nose and do something about your community, how are you going to change the national scene? Our fault is that we try to get in the big picture while ignoring the small. Besides, there aren't any rumblings that make sense nationally.

"If people are not concerned about the house they live in, how can you get them to worry about a country, state or national house? The way to build a house—or maybe rip it down—is from the bottom up.

"Look, I have to believe in this. I need this hope. Working in a shop or a plant is a hard way to go. I have no formal education. If I didn't have something to strive for, I don't think I could handle it."

Tommy Kersey runs a farm in Unadilla, Georgia, with his father and brothers. His two sons also work the land, where he grows soybeans, peanuts and cotton. With his muscular torso, weather-beaten complexion and good looks, he would suit a hokey Norman Rockwell painting of "The American Farmer." Indeed, until a while ago, his political thoughts would have fit such a painting. Now he is a local leader of the American Agricultural Movement, which is at odds with his Government.

"Hell, yes, I hate bureaucrats. Bureaucrats, corporations and middlemen. Do you know that in the Agricultural Extension Service there are 3.2 employees for every farmer! The Government is wasting that kind of money, while 50 percent of all farmers nationally are deep into loans.

"What the consumer should realize is that they are paying three times the price at the marketplace over what the farmer got. That price is to pay all those people in administration, and they don't produce a goddamn thing. I know for a fact that lettuce came out of Mexico at 3 cents a head, the highest going for 14 cents, and when it got to the consumer, it was $1.29 a head. That was done by corporate middlemen fixing prices.

"All the farmer is asking for is cost of production plus a reasonable return. That isn't too much to ask, since agriculture is about the only thing that lowers the national debt. Our minerals are running out. All we really have is agriculture and our labor to offset our debts.

"Another year like last, with droughts and floods, and every small farmer will be extinct. The only reason we're surviving is because we can get loans on the inflated price of our land. The real election issue next time should be: 'Why are we giving our money to foreign countries?'

"They built a grain elevator here with $14 million of taxpayers' money to help the Georgia farmer. Now it's leased to Continental Grain, which is Swedish-owned. Foreign-owned corporations are making a fortune while the farmer is told we must have a 'cheap food' policy to the rest of the world. Hell, farmers have to use their land. Let us grow what we want in abundance, and the price will go down from sheer competition. Now the controlling corporation can set any price, whatever the traffic will bear.

"Somebody better listen. We have 40,000 farmers in Georgia alone who are with us. Out of 2.8 million who work the land nationally, 800,000 are in the movement. Another 50 percent support us, and the rest are sympathetic. The problem is, since the corporations took over, we have no voting bloc anymore and no big money lobby. The Government doesn't give a damn about a handful of independents anymore, because we don't have the clout of decades ago.

"But they're mistaken. All you need is key people in strategic places. Phew! The blacks did it when no one would listen. Besides, now we're backing other groups. We have

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been supplying the striking coal miners with food. If we are going to lose, we'll lose on the right team.

"Corporations never die. Just look at the taxes they pay. [He pulls out dossiers on major corporations.] The Government is allowing the big to swallow up the small. We are in the bonds of slavery to big business and big corporations.

"With the recession now on us, the future looks even worse, if that is possible. We can foresee in three to five years a total collapse of the American agricultural system. If Congress hadn't appropriated $2 billion recently for the agricultural credit system, it might have happened already.

"I've been talking to a lot of old-timers, and they say this recession is worse than the Depression back in the 1930s. Sure, you couldn't sell back in the 1930s, but you weren't in hock. Do you realize that 25 to 30 percent of the farmers nationally have a negative net worth, and for the kids—the farmers under 30—who just started a short time ago, it's 80 percent?

"Do you think I'm dropping fancy figures on you? Well, check this one out. In 1970 the Farmers Home Administration [the lending arm of the Department of Agriculture] had $1.7 billion lent out to farmers. In 1980 the figure is $42 billion! That's how much farmers are in hock, and you-know-who has been President for four of those years. At least, in the Depression, if you weren't making money, you could eat your produce and slaughter and eat your own hogs. You didn't owe the land you worked on.

"The only hope we have is that Senator Talmadge of Georgia is trying to get a bill passed to give us a three-year moratorium on our debts. At least that will buy us some time. If we're forced to pay up on time, we're finished. We won't have the money to plant.

"Hell, Carter can't do anything right. That hostage rescue was a cheap effort to bail himself out in the polls. He was forced into it. The way to handle that kind of thing is the way Kennedy did during the Cuban missile crisis. There was a man in the White House then. He didn't need everyone to push him into foreign-policy decisions.

"Hell, all you people might be seeing us guys on television during election time. When all those networks are down there in Plains, we might roll 10,000 into town for the television boys. That's the only way you get them to report on anything.

"I am a charter member of the ABC Club—'Anybody But Carter.' Hell, I might take Castro over Carter. I don't know what Castro would do; I've watched this other guy for four years.

"What can we do? Well, we might hold our own Boston Tea Party and start throwing beef and produce overboard from some of these foreign ships. What the Government doesn't realize is that they're pushing revolution. Do you know that there are power lines across every farm in the country? If they thought the New York blackout was bad, what would a national blackout be like?"

I asked him if he had read his remarks in a newspaper years back, what would he have thought of the man who said them? He bellowed with laughter: "I would have called him a fool or a fuckin' Communist."

Peggy Terry, a waitress, lives in the "uptown" section of Chicago, a place where Southern whites emigrate. She has lived and worked in Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama and Kentucky, where she did migrant farm work: "It wasn't till I read Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* that I was proud of my people." Now, she proudly pronounces herself a "hillbilly."

"You know, that's the problem with this country—nobody is satisfied with what you are. They want you to be something else. A lot of Spanish are moving in around here, and I admire them for keeping their language. Not like us Irish did. Who the hell wants to be English anyway? WASPs, they're dull people. It took the Irish to put some life in them.

"I can't watch television. There's nothing on that I can identify with. We're either hard hats or racists or in the Klan. When I saw *Deliverance*, I wrote a letter to Burt Reynolds, telling him he didn't know a damn thing about hillbillies, and we picketed the theater here. The middle class doesn't know anything about us, but they write about us all the same.

"You know, I used to hate the blacks. I was living in Montgomery during the time of the bus boycott. When King got arrested, I went down to the jail to see him released. [She laughs.] I never saw a nigger like him, with that white suit and all that dignity. I knew he was a special nigger.

"There was an old saying, 'Two on one is nigger fun.' That meant beating up, but I never saw it. Then I saw them beating up King—gangs of them. That did it. When I came to Chicago, I joined CORE. It's the Irish in me—I love to fight. I marched for civil rights, for peace, for what-have-you. I have been beaten and jailed.

"Politics drains you. I get depressed a lot now because I don't know what to do. I don't believe in guns, but when I hear about a ghetto burning, I say, 'Go to it, baby.' Nobody is meant to live like that. What is life worth if there isn't something to struggle for?

"I think Carter's job is to quiet the country down. He's like a sleeping pill. I'm so disgusted with him. He couldn't have won without us at the bottom, and he turned out to be absolutely nothing. At least Nixon was like Wallace. He got people out to fight. I think Carter is in Rockefeller's pocket.

"Look what he did to the blacks who got him elected. He turned his back on them, but that will explode in his face. Next time, it will be worse. He's trying to put a lid on a boiling kettle.

"I was just hoping a Southerner would bring us something fresh. I worked so hard for Carter and got my kids and neighbors to vote for him, and now they laugh at me.

"Sometimes I wish we had a real popular Communist running for President in this country. He might frighten the ones in office into feeding our own poor. I truly believe if we elected a President who was for us, they wouldn't allow him to take the chair.

"They lie to you. I remember my grandmother and my mother stooping over in the fields, working like animals. If hard work in this country made you rich, my family would be millionaires." □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

In Search of Bellow

Mark Harris is the author of more than a dozen books, notable among them Bang the Drum Slowly, Best Father Ever Invented *and* Wake Up, Stupid. *For over a decade, however, one book has eluded him—a biography of Saul Bellow. Though Harris is clearly an admirer, Bellow refused to cooperate. "He had come to be mistrustful of individuals," writes Harris, "seeing their opportunism as unfortunate but real, and he became, to save himself, not angry with them but only difficult, recalcitrant, reluctant, a foot-dragger, a woodchuck whose mind was a memory-bank of holes to run into." Next month, the University of Georgia Press will publish* Saul Bellow: Drumlin Woodchuck, *Harris's account of his frustrating mission. An excerpt follows.*

MARK HARRIS

To this point of our acquaintance our relationship had been serene. When I wrote to him he responded. Now, however, I would go too far, introduce a bad subject and cause the most awful difficulty between us.

I spent the summer of 1966 with my wife and our three children in France. From the village of Tourtour, I wrote to Bellow:

> . . . Great biography may be creative, too, and I have here a very short list of only three names—of which yours is one—of my contemporaries, whose biographies I should like to write. It is the same list I had in mind in January, when I visited your house, but I hesitated to mention the matter for precisely the reasons I hesitate now: reasons of doubt; is it right for me to do?
>
> I want only to ask now, as I've asked my other potential subjects [avant-garde theatrical producers Herbert Blau and Jules Irving] that you not say No to me now, nor Yes to someone else, until I have a chance to present my case in person.

And so, of course, to present my case in person I must go to Chicago where Bellow was. Meanwhile, after seeing a program in London of three one-act plays by Bellow, I wrote to him to tell him my impressions. He did not reply to that letter. I sent him a copy of a new book of mine, just published, but he did not acknowledge receiving it.

Anyone who can ignore his mail wins my admiration. Bellow writes that Oscar Wilde "had known a promising young man who had ruined himself through the vice of answering letters." Stern [Richard G. Stern, the novelist, to whom Harris dedicates his book] has told me that Bellow receives "torrents" of mail, that he once ignored six telegrams from a college seeking to honor him. Not his biography but his work occupied Bellow. His art. What is art? Robert Frost called a poem "a momentary stay against confusion." Bellow quotes Henry James: "the cure of souls." What can art tell? "Well," replies Bellow's man Henderson, "for instance, that chaos doesn't run the whole show. That this is not a sick and hasty ride, helpless, through a dream into oblivion. No, sir! It can be arrested by a thing or two. By art, for instance. The speed is checked, the time is redivided." He was busy. He was at work. Why should he have answered my mail? Never mind, I went to him.

I arrived by air in Chicago on the afternoon of March 23 and traveled by taxicab to the Del Prado Hotel on the South Side. In the hotel I instantly telephoned Bellow to arrange to meet with him to talk about my letter from France. I telephoned him at his home. Yet I must have known that he would not be there because I had heard of his separation from his memorable and beautiful wife, Susan. Therefore it must have been Susan I wished to speak to. I remembered that she had worn dark pants fitting snugly, and her face shone. Her hips I remembered. And her lips. Hips and lips. A portrait of beauty, health and happiness, and I had assumed that after two mistaken marriages Bellow had formed with her a bond to last forever.

Greetings. Casual talk. I asked for Bellow. Susan said that he was "probably this very minute walking in the door at Morton's Steak House," where he had gone to dinner with his son Gregory. I asked when he would return. She said she did not know when he would return, that in fact she did not know if she would see him again that evening; no, she did not expect to see him, he had been there to see Daniel—she was flustered—sometimes she was more certain of his hours than at other times; or of his days . . . "Mark!" she said, deciding not to prolong things (her sharp, crackling firing-off of my name made my heart leap), delivering shocking news with speed, to reduce its impact—"Mark! Saul and I are separated."

I felt a kind of satisfaction to hear this, because Bellow had not replied to my letter from France, which had not been, after all, a simple letter dashed off on my summer vacation, but a very serious letter proposing to invest a great portion of my life in his. My satisfaction illuminated me at other levels. Failure humanized him, as if he were sitting in the chair beside me in the Minneapolis barbershop. We cheer for people on the way "up," but when they get there we throw rocks at them. ("The crowd razzed him as he acknowledged at last that this was beyond his strength. He simply couldn't do it. And I rejoiced at the guy's failure. Which is a hell of a thing to admit, but it happens to be the case."—*Henderson the Rain King*) We welcome the humility one will acquire from a dose of everyday trouble.

Telephoning Morton's Steak House, I caused Bellow to be paged. The lady asked me for his first name. I declined to give it, thinking I had no right to invade his privacy in a public place. When he arrived at the telephone he seemed amused that I had made a point of it. He was surprised to hear from me—he had not known I was coming to Chicago (he said; I had reason to think otherwise)—and I was cheered by his friendliness, thinking it was a good sign pointing to his still being wide open to the question raised in my letter to him July 31, from France. He asked me when he would see me. I had another appointment this evening, I said, but I could sit with him a while now, and he invited me to do so.

A taxicab driver declined to carry me to Morton's Steak House, pointing out that it was only three blocks away. But which three blocks? I was always a stranger to Chicago, through which I had passed for years by train and car. Lately I had thought of it as Bellow's city, thinking him even a sort of booster of the city. But that was another misconception of mine: I had scrambled the idea of Bellow's "success" with the idea

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of alliance with power, with financial and police establishments. We think all big shots band together. The big shots themselves discriminate between present power and mere literature; the best that can be said for their interest in literature, as Bellow early observed, is that they have "no objections" to it. "None will be heard as long as the interests of power are not touched."

The idea of Bellow's unity with the city amused him. "Yes," he said to me on the street one night, "this hideousness, it's all mine." He has described himself as "A Chicagoan out and out." On the other hand, he told Jane Howard of *Life* that he has lived 200 places. "My second wife used to say I was medieval pure and simple. I've always been among foreigners, and never considered myself a native of anything." Herzog's second wife, Madeleine, says to her husband, "You'll never get the surroundings *you* want. Those are in the twelfth century somewhere."

I hesitated to walk in the dark, for I did not know what sort of section I was in. A lady told me to take a bus. All day on a jet plane at 600 miles per hour. Now a city bus stopping twice in three blocks. With Bellow was his son Gregory, a man in his early 20s, a graduate student, I think, at the University of Chicago, in sociology, if I am not mistaken. Bellow studied sociology at Northwestern, but when he attempted graduate work in that field at the University of Wisconsin his academic writings turned into fiction.

This seemed to me to be the wrong moment to ask Bellow his feelings about my letter from France. I thought that when I asked him we should be alone, so that his answer might be unaffected by the possible opinions or reactions of other persons. I drank coffee with them. Gregory was telling us his feelings about the media, which angered him. He thought they were "biased." He cited, as an example, the media's view of the fighting in Vietnam, where they seemed to see the conflict as "Americans" against "Communists."

Bellow's reply has characterized him for me. I have grown older with it, learning to understand it, simple as it may seem. The problem with the media, said Bellow, was not their "bias" but their "reality"—not the semantic question of loaded words or unconscious partisanship but the essential question of whether they can see the event whole, in perspective, in history. To see things whole was to be, for Bellow, nothing but trouble in the years immediately before him; he was to take a difficult and unpopular position, preserving his own vision above the clamor of the hour.

My own difficulty in accepting Bellow's viewpoint may have cost me the chance to enter into a swifter, more immediate relationship with him, as biographer. Bellow was aloof from the debate over Vietnam as he had been aloof from World War II—dangling man then and later. Joseph in his flat was "insulated here from the war." A quarter of a century later Bellow still refused to be swept up, distracted. He rejected the historic moment.

As the decade advanced, and the debate over Vietnam divided the country, Bellow maintained his view of history as time, breadth, transcendent. In a letter to me he had sarcastically described "an age" as "the interval between appearances of the Sunday Times News of the Week in Review," a nice witticism which I might then have been too preoccupied to savor. He remained at his work—in Randolph Bourne's phrase, "below the battle." Bellow once expressed himself as scornful of "the writer who was interested in war, but not in the things that cause war." He required neither a gun to prove his manhood nor a public forum to prove his faith: his work was his utterance. If he was somehow an erratic father he nevertheless murdered no one's children with a gun, airplane, or other infantile device; nor, on the other hand, led a march through the street lest it lead to the same thing.

I asked Bellow if he had read the book that I had sent him—*Twentyone Twice*, my own book of Africa and early radicalism. No, he was saving all books of friends to read at a later date. I told him that if he had read it and not liked it he should certainly feel free to say so, but he said no, that was not the case either, he had simply not yet read it.

He asked me whether I had read Alice Linenthal's novel. She was a San Francisco woman. I had unfortunately not. Bellow said he was "tired" of the idea of freedom for women through sexual emancipation, but whether this was a fair criticism of Linenthal's book I did not know. Her former husband, Mark Linenthal, had been a friend of Bellow's. I thought they resembled each other, but when I said so Bellow became alarmed. "He's *fat*," he said. Oh no, I said, he hasn't been fat for years, and Bellow appeared relieved.

Soon Curt Johnson appeared at our table. The Bellows prepared to depart. Johnson had with him a copy of the magazine *December*, of which he was editor, bearing upon its cover a girl in a brief dress, proclaiming itself "a magazine of the arts and opinion." Bellow said he could see the art—where was the opinion?

I should have thought the editor of a Chicago magazine would have seized the moment to solicit a contribution from Bellow, but that did not occur. Johnson apart, one thing I certainly learned during the course of my inquiry into the life of Bellow was that not every Chicago writer loves every other. Poor civic pride. A most unfortunate thing, but true. I should have thought Bellow's work would be valued for itself among discriminating readers. Often, however, Bellow's popular "success" obscures the vision of people who ought to make their own distinctions. As a result, he has left behind him pain and confusion in Chicago. His crime appears to be his failure to live up to other people's expectations. People who had once thought of him as sharing with them certain working-class ideals complain that he has ceased to be a working-class writer. Some Jews expected him to be more specifically parochial in his writing, but he has failed them, too. He is criticized for being so popular; on the other hand for his difficult academic obscurantism.

The next day, at the Center for Continuing Education, I was the only guest in a building of 117 rooms. The most recent conference had departed; mine had not assembled.

About five o'clock Dick Stern came for me. Stern as writer is quite as committed as Bellow, not less exciting, not less intelligent, not less distinctive in his style, less available than Bellow to a popular reading audience. He is the author of seven novels, other fiction and superior reportage, much of it awaiting the appreciation of time. He is difficult reading for many people. When I first met him, in 1961, he gave me a play in manuscript. I thought it good and lively and profound. The writer Philip Roth recommended it to a Broadway producer, Max Gordon, who had told Roth, "Even if it only looks like a play George Kaufman can make a play out of it." But after a while came a second message from Gordon to Roth:

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"I read your professor's play but even George Kaufman couldn't make a play out of it." Such is the gulf between one kind of mind and another. Bellow, too, was frustrated by Broadway.

I thought Stern was undoubtedly my best adviser in the matter of Bellow's biography. Therefore, when he arrived at the Center for Continuing Education I promptly told him my idea. His response was everything I could have hoped for. *Enthusiast*—that's a top-notch word for Dick, to go with *bolsterer*. I in turn was deeply relieved to hear his enthusiasm, both for my idea itself, and upon the grounds that Stern was entitled by long and faithful friendship with Bellow to prior rights, so to speak. If he had any plans along that line I would step aside. Perhaps with relief.

"No," he said, "it never entered my mind. Recently, when Saul went off on an airplane somewhere I thought, 'If he goes down I'll have to write a piece.' " But biography had never entered his mind. "I'm too close to him," he said. "It's funny he didn't mention receiving your letter."

"I thought it was funny myself."

"It's nothing to *worry* about," said Stern.

"Maybe he didn't want to discuss it," I said.

"Not with me," said Stern.

"Not with anybody," I said. "Maybe he dismissed it from his mind right away."

"No," said Dick, "he'd be flattered that you want to do it."

Of course I was encouraged by his remarks. He said it was particularly appropriate that a novelist should undertake such a work, for a novelist is notable "not only because he invents but because of the way he *arranges* material."

"I won't be *inventing*," I defensively said. "But it's true I'll be arranging."

"Of course," he said, impatient to see the work begun, as if I could start that very minute. "Why didn't you mention this to him last night?"

"His son was there."

"Oh, for Christ's sake," said Stern, "the kid's only 3 years old."

"No, Gregory," I said. "Not Daniel."

"Never mind who's there," said Stern, "mention it to him tonight."

We arrived at the Sterns' house at 4901 South Kimbark. There we were to meet Bellow. That was the plan. The Sterns' house was spacious. I admired especially the splendid wood paneling. I again met Gay, reminding her that she had been pregnant when I last saw her on April 6, 1961. "Not pregnant now," she said with satisfaction. Their four children one by one came forward from various rooms of the house; and a child or children of Gay's sister, who was visiting.

A message awaited Dick from Bellow, who was this very hour, Dick said, in the company of his *bonne amie*. Stern spoke in slightly evasive language in the presence of the children. But Bellow was on the way, Dick said.

Soon, however, Bellow telephoned again to say that he had lost his wallet and intended to return to his home to see if he had left it there. He had been all day at his lawyer's, Dick said, perhaps in connection with his taxes. He had recently made a tax payment of $40,000, mainly against revenue from *Herzog*, and as a further defense against taxes he had given his house at Tivoli, New York, as a gift outright to Bard College. The manuscript he had read to me in that house with his hat on had cost him the house itself. "The government, which had taken no previous interest in my soul," Charlie Citrine complains, "immediately claimed seventy percent in the result of its creative efforts."

Citrine laments that he had "bungled the whole money thing." Yes, bungled it because he had never thought about it, never prepared for it, never expected it. Visions of sugar plums had never been Bellow's. . . . Bastards of the government, bastards at law tried to devour Bellow. "Oh! the might of money and the entanglement of art with it—the dollar as the soul's husband: a marriage nobody has had the curiosity to study." Accountants were into him, judges were into him, wives were into him. Citrine "owed publishers about seventy thousand dollars in advances for books I was too paralyzed to write. I had lost interest in them utterly."

Bellow knew nothing of bag men, of secret numbered accounts in foreign banks, of laundered money. Those things were the devices of patriots: President Nixon, for example. The little tragedy was not the money. The tragedy was as Citrine said—that neither the government nor its people was much interested in anything until the money entered. For Citrine it was education finally: "But I was beginning to see the American dollar-drive for what it was. It had assumed the proportions of a cosmic force. It stood between us and the real forces."

Again Bellow telephoned, this time to announce that he had found his wallet. We agreed to go to his apartment instead of his coming to the Sterns'. Therefore we went. I do not know where. I do not know how long we drove to reach there, so intensely were Stern and I talking. It was evening, dark.

Bellow's apartment was small, somewhat cramped, and in its character not at all his. Later that year he moved to a grander apartment. Maybe this was a borrowed apartment. I was introduced to his companion, Bonne Amie, a woman who instantly charmed me in a number of ways, not the least of which was her telling me that her mother-in-law admired my work. Afterward, however, in Lafayette, Indiana, where I became associated with Purdue University, her mother-in-law attacked me in the newspaper for my activities against the Vietnam War, declaring that I was a leader of a lawless mob pledged to burn down Purdue.

Bonne Amie was slightly dark, as if Latin, and she wore transparent net stockings upon legs slightly plump which she crossed in a graceful way. She was the mother of two children. She had come to town from Iowa City, where she was to receive a Master's degree in creative writing. What better way to study creative writing than by attaching herself to Bellow? Education is just hangin' around, said Frost. She may have been one of those "vaguely intellectual" women to whom Stern referred, but that may not be different from her being one who harbored that "sealed treasure" Bellow knew in the souls of women. She readily laughed, but I think she was sometimes uncertain why. Laughing on faith. Laugh now, comprehend later.

"Go ahead," said Stern to me, "mention this other matter."

I should broach my biographical idea! "Now?"

"Open the discussion," said Stern.

I remember that we were standing,

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leaving. We had never removed our coats. We must have been waiting for Bonne Amie to return from another room. "No, this isn't the time," I said, but Stern insisted that it *was* the time, and I reflected to myself that Stern knew Bellow a thousandfold better than I, and if Stern said it was the time, it was, and I should be well-advised to do as he said. Else why had I gone to Stern in the first place? I said to Bellow, "By the way, regarding my letter."

He was perplexed, or appeared so. He said, "What letter was that, Mark?"

I was chilled. "Of July 31st of last year," I said. He was in no way enlightened. "My letter from France," I said, "where I asked you if I might write your biography."

He looked at neither Stern nor me, staring off between our heads, his face whitening as he drew to himself either the idea for the first time, or his renewed resistance to it. Nothing in his face revealed either that he favored my idea or opposed it, or even that he heard it. He searched his mind for the letter, not for his response, saying so inaudibly he must have been speaking to himself, "I didn't receive any letter." He sat upon a chair (one chair, later, was all I could remember of the furnishings of that apartment), still staring straight forward, not at me, not at Stern—"He won't say No," Stern had said, and indeed Bellow said neither No nor Yes nor anything further but simply kept his silence, permitting the idea to move out, even as he had moved out, Susan said, undramatically, no particular explanations, as if now by the invisible power of his impassivity my idea would rise like an odor into the pores of the ceiling or like a faux pas escape notice if we pretended not to have heard it. □

A Pro's Puckish Prose

J. D. O'HARA

AMAZONS. *By Cleo Birdwell. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 390 pp. $12.95.*

The title is misleading. There is only one Amazon here, Ms. Birdwell, and her martial weapon is a hockey stick. *Amazons* is her autobiography, with appropriately heavy emphasis on last year, when she made athletic history by being the first woman to play in the National Hockey League. Fans now look forward to her return under the New York Rangers' interesting new management, about which she says some perceptive things. Together, her play and her story should give our fall a lift: she bids fair to outshine current football stars and she certainly displays more wit and intelligence than our country's leading pushball teams, the Democans and the Republicrats. But Birdwell does not write primarily for sports fans, among whom the literacy rate is low. She writes for a higher audience—us—capable of appreciating such subtlety as that of her dust-jacket photo. In the picture she wears her Rangers uniform, but her flowing hair and a businesslike skate cover the end letters and reveal her as (in French) an angel.

There is something unexpected about an autobiography written, even by an angel, at such a fledgling stage. After all, we do not read such works for mere names, dates and places. We seek insightful, amusing and thought-provoking observations arising from experience and bearing valuably on life as we know it. And what of all this can we expect from a 23-year-old native of Badger, Ohio, who has spent most of her recent years playing hockey in distant leagues? Face it, all pucks look alike.

But it figures that any woman who survives an N.H.L. season must have some extra smarts. Birdwell shows hers even in her introduction: "Hockey is so fast it's practically nonlinear. What I have in mind is a book that's slow and sunlit and kind of meadowy. Reflections and meditations. I think my experience in the National Hockey League lends itself to some major thematic material." And she begins her memoir with a passage from the mystic, Wadi Assad. She will return to him, and to life in Badger. There's a lovely meditative survey of the four seasons, for instance, that should be quoted in its entirety. The introductory sentences will whet the appetite: "You knew it was midspring when you heard birdsong at dusk." "Summer was heat, stillness, and shade." "This was the holiday that led us into fall, when the light was soft and gold, and the leaves turned red,

J. D. O'Hara teaches at the University of Connecticut.

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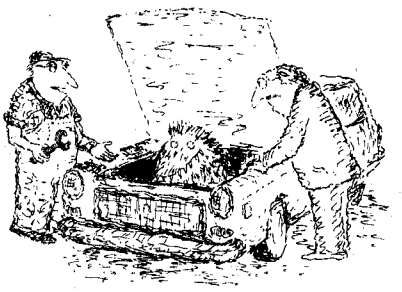

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yellow, rust, winy dark, and amber." "Then one grayish day you'd get up and smell snow in the air." Of course her profession evokes a different tone:

> The world of men was a sound in my ears. Men on skates marching over concrete. Sticks tossed into corners. Men muttering matter-of-fact curses. The blast of hot showers. A hundred banging kinds of background noise.
>
> That's why these memoirs will be quiet, reflective, and thoughtful.

But Birdwell is not a professional author; her narrative follows no game plan. She experiences it as we do, moment by moment, and is sometimes equally surprised at the turns of events. Naturally, since she is a woman and full of small-town sociability, she writes mostly not about hockey action, in which every player is alone, or even about her happy youth. She tells about the people she lives among. And in the world of professional sport they are almost all men.

> I am more or less a connoisseur of the male form. . . . They are interesting bodies, the bodies of athletes, because of the wounds and bruises as much as the general excellence of form. The hurt is what gives these bodies their special emotional quality. Years of physical stress have made the players look noble and battered and antique Greeklike, except for goaltenders, who look like mounds of vanilla horsemeat, by and large.

The assurance of these generalizations and of the details given elsewhere indicates the modernity of these memoirs. Even her hymns to childhood include topics not traditional in the handling of that theme. Birdwell is a woman of the present. Many women are? Certainly lots of women publish books claiming that they are. But this is precisely where Birdwell differs. In such central areas as equality and sexuality, Birdwell . . . *Birdwell has no hangups. Nor has she overcome any.* This is not to say that she is a smug know-it-all. She is young. Much is new to her. She admits it:

> This is the second straight chapter that ends with sex and intimate lighting. There is a huge tradition behind this, but I'm not sure I want to be a part of it. There are other ways to end chapters and I'm determined to find some of them before too long.

She does. After all, she is attractive and suddenly famous in New York; she can be used to make money, and in other ways. She is besieged by lovers, promoters and other weirdos. All weirdos. Consider your own acquaintances. After narrating such encounters for a while Birdwell begins a chapter with the exhausted one-sentence paragraph: "All I wanted to do was play hockey."

She does not. In that chapter she leaves one man to visit another's apartment where she is phoned by a third. The chapter ends with some glumly appropriate observations: "I thought this would be a little book of meditations. . . . I'd like to develop a theme or find a shape for events. I didn't think major thematic material would be this hard to turn up." Then she recalls a childhood favorite, *The American Girl Book of Sports Stories*. "Those stories had themes, every last one of them. The events were shaped." But her own life is different, as she realizes: "That was Badger. This was Philadelphia, and the Spectrum was full of white-eyed, shining savages."

They are not the only savages. But space runs short. No time to speak of the Mafia and snowmobiles, the Arabs and hockey and real estate. Doom approaches. But women can find amusement even there; after all, theirs is a funny world by nature.

> Limp, the penis is a dubious item compared to the human hand. It just hangs there, backed by testicles, like a soloist with a rhythm section. Even the word is funny. . . . But women accept it as the force of nature and myth that it is. I don't think we want to change the basic principle.

Well, Birdwell possesses many qualities undemonstrated here. She is perceptive, she uses language so well that one wants to read the whole novel to friends, even on the telephone, collect, and she is marvelously funny even in crises. Order by the case. Christmas is coming.

The reader—you there—will have suspected something. A female hockey player? One would have heard, somehow. A funny female writer? Yes, it's possible; but her name is Ann Beattie. What's going on here? Who is this soloist really?

One can only intuit. Intuition reports that there are only two men alive capable of writing this book in English, and one of them didn't. So it must be the work of that terrific Athenian-American novelist Don DeLillo. Place your bets. And don't read the book in public if you have a shrill, whinnying laugh; people will complain. □

THEATER

JULIUS NOVICK

Summer
Passione

Summer, by Hugh Leonard, at New York's Hudson Guild Theater, is less tightly focused, less dramaturgically clever, less sentimentally charming than Leonard's other play, *Da*, which went on from the Hudson Guild to success on Broadway. But *Summer* has gentle virtues of its own.

A group of middle-aged people sit on the grass, thinking long, wistful thoughts about their lives, and a couple of young ones voice their hopes for the future: *Summer* has this in common with the second act of *The Cherry Orchard*. But in Leonard's Ireland there is no sound of a far-off breaking string to indicate the end of an old way of life and the beginning of a new one. His characters, like Chekhov's in *Uncle Vanya* rather than *The Cherry Orchard*, are not swept up in social change but trapped in aimlessness and mediocrity.

In the first act of *Summer*, on a Sunday in 1968, three couples plus two of their children are picnicking on a hillside overlooking Dublin. Jess White is a shabby, unprosperous little man, obedient to his wife, Myra; he gets drunk now and then in order to stop being obedient and wishes he could "get off the mark with a fast bit of stuff. Just the once, to think back on. . . . Maybe when I get the new suit." Myra White is a warmhearted, comfortable, dowdy innocent whose life revolves around children and church. Richard Halvey is a rare-book dealer, married to an ex-beauty-queen; he is hoping to begin an affair with Jan Loftus, a cool, fastidious woman with a gabby, fatuous husband. Young Michael Halvey complains about "the modern generation of parents": "If they see a Porsche that's doing ninety, they have to pass it, but they won't pass a pub that's standing still."

In the second act, six years later, the same people reassemble at the same place for another summer Sunday picnic. But the ancient stone cross that had marked the spot has been removed to the National Museum; in spite of an ugly wire garbage basket, the ground is strewn with refuse and the countryside below

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has been covered with little houses (another *Cherry Orchard* echo). The people, too, for the most part, are similarly the worse for wear; even the young ones have lost their high hopes and are going the way of their parents.

Summer is an Irish play that does not harp upon its Irishness. Its themes are Chekhov's themes: the baffling way in which life fails to make good on promises and expectations; the way people deteriorate as time works on them; the vague sense of something missing. They are old themes, but they bear repeating, and Leonard deals sensitively with them. Individual souls are not deeply probed, but the changing interrelationships among them are often finely rendered. There are a few rough edges in the dramaturgy: awkward transitions, monologues that sound a little too much like monologues, a climactic revelation (about adultery) that is a little too obviously climactic. But there is shrewd understanding in Leonard's depiction of the aftermath of that revelation: nearly everyone refuses to admit that they have heard what they have heard, that they know what they know, and things are patched up, as things so often are.

Sad as it is, the play is not depressing; there is a pensive sweetness in the open air that Brian Murray's staging captures nicely. Moreover, the author finds room for comedy as the characters interact: they are Irish, after all. The acting is variable—some trouble with the accents, among other things—but Pauline Flanagan as Myra, James Greene as Jess, Charlotte Moore as Jan, and Mia Dillon as Jan's daughter Louise are just about perfect.

Summer has nothing really new to say, and no spectacular new ways of saying it, but it amused, interested, touched me: it both renewed and consoled my sense of the sadness of ordinary lives, including my own.

Albert Innaurato is generally understood to have some credentials as a serious playwright—he went to the Yale Drama School, after all—but his new play, *Passione* (at the Morosco), is a jolly, cozy, sentimental, thoroughly Broadway comedy, and not a good one.

In this play Innaurato has returned once again to his roots, to South Philadelphia, to the Italian neighborhood that served as the setting for his most successful play, *Gemini*. Ten years after she walked out on her Italian-American husband, Berto, hillbilly Aggie returns to South Philadelphia with her sister Sarah, ostensibly to collect the furniture, but actually, implausibly, because she still loves Berto. Finding that her son is now a circus clown married to the circus fat lady, she denounces them both in blistering terms, hampered not a whit by the fact that she had not bothered to communicate with the boy in any way for ten years. Meanwhile, Sarah attracts the eye of Renzo, a small-time hood who is Berto's friend and the fat lady's father. At the end, since this is Broadway, the right people fall happily, on cue, into each other's arms.

There are signs that Innaurato meant the confrontation between Aggie and Berto to become a significant comic confrontation between two contrasting ways of life, but nothing much comes of it. Italian-American life as represented in *Passione* is such a welter of lusty, gusty, earthy, emotional, pasta-and-vino stereotypes that I'm surprised any Italian-American could have the face to write it. How, I wonder, did Innaurato manage to leave out an organ grinder and a monkey? On the other hand, Aggie and Sarah lack even a clear stereotype to sustain them; there is no consistent sense at all of where they might have come from, of what kind of life might have shaped them.

Passione is noisy and busy; dud jokes abound. "I think you Italian men think that the postal service is a mirage. Or is it that you don't write letters because it's the only thing in America not run by the Mafia?" The attempts at tear-jerking are arbitrary and crass, and bringing down the first-act curtain on the sudden collapse of an old man is the cheapest trick in the book.

There are two or three good scenes. In one, the fat lady consoles her husband the clown by telling him he's "a Wop in a WASP society," and suggesting, through an ironic litany of his inadequacies and hers, that they can manage O.K. the way they are. Another is devoted to a terrific, no-holds-barred, quite literally smashing amatory combat between Sarah and Renzo, for which much of the credit should presumably go to Frank Langella, the director. Langella has done everything for *Passione* that could fairly be expected; the acting is broad, but seldom strident. I particularly enjoyed the harassed lecherousness

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of Dick Latessa's Renzo, but Jerry Stiller as Berto, Angela Paton as Aggie, and Laurel Cronin as the fat lady, are admirable too. They cannot, however, disguise the clumsy piece of hackwork that is Innaurato's play. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

The Elephant Man
Portrait of Teresa

Now playing in New York are two versions of the strange life of John Merrick, the nineteenth-century victim of a rare and hideously deforming disease, neurofibromatosis. One is a movie, the other a play, and both are called *The Elephant Man*. The sponsors of the film, which is the later arrival, insist that theirs is an independent work, and I am sure that is so. Nevertheless, they are bound to be compared, for it is surprising that two treatments of the same basic material can produce such different results.

It is a matter of selection and emphasis. The play is staged austerely, using only one set and essential furniture and props. The central actor uses no special makeup and distorts himself only to the extent that his normal body permits. The interest of the play lies in the quality of Merrick's mind and the ethical problem inherent in his predicament.

The film is luxuriantly physical. It has invested in much research and has spent much money to re-create not only large areas of London Hospital in Victorian times but Liverpool Station, the port at Ostend, circus freak shows in England and on the Continent, and sections of London's ferocious Victorian slums. Further, Merrick's repellent appearance, known from contemporary photographs and a cast of his head and shoulders made after his death, is painstakingly reproduced and worn, I would guess with great discomfort, by the actor, John Hurt.

The movie, like the play, is concerned with the sick man's mind, but only to the extent of establishing that he has one—that he is "not an animal." The Merrick of the play is shown to be not only cogent but sharply intelligent and sardonically aware of the complex motives of those who rescue him from the degradation of carnival exploitation and make of him a cult hero. The screen Merrick, however, limits himself to expressions of almost servile gratitude and to finicky imitation of British upper-class manners and speech. It is not a matter of which characterization is the more plausible, given the biographical data, but of which makes the more incisive drama. The film is melodramatic and pathetic; the play is thoughtful, sometimes bitter, and sad.

The key to the ethical content of the story is in the doctor, Frederick Treves. He is a good man and an ambitious one. When he stumbles onto the brutalized Merrick, he is moved by the creature's plight and at the same time sees a chance to make a stir in medical circles. Initially, Treves must struggle to have Merrick accepted by the hospital authorities and is absorbed in establishing contact with his protégé. That done, Treves begins to worry about his own role in Merrick's new life. At one point in the film, he bursts out to his wife, "Am I a good man or a bad one?" But that question is not pursued and indeed the meagerness of Merrick's character does not encourage it. He is someone easy to patronize and, in short order the cream of London society is doing so, basking in its generous civility toward the grotesque unfortunate. Furthermore, a parallel exploitation, organized secretly by the hospital's brutish night watchman, is so drunkenly awful that the complacent voyeurism of the gentry is exonerated by the comparison.

In the play, Dr. Treves's dilemma is central. He realizes that, like Bytes, the carnival "owner" of Merrick, he is profiting from the invalid, professionally and socially. Treves has become the toast of London, the friend of Mrs. Kendal, greatest actress of the day, and of members of the royal family. By the time Merrick dies (at 27), the doctor is a man seriously at odds with himself, and the audience is left with mixed feelings as to the springs of altruism.

There is an aspect of this that I think the film develops more forcefully than the play. By carrying the action beyond Merrick's room, by showing the underside of Victorian London's splendor, it illustrates once again the depressing fact that the public, though it can be deeply stirred by a spectacular personal tragedy, remains unmoved by generalized and chronic suffering.

But that said, the film is a handsome disappointment, though I admit that if there had been no play I might have felt its missed opportunities less sharply. The director (David Lynch) and a large cast work hard to make their project seem important as well as large, and they achieve a kind of antiquarian verisimilitude. But the movie is shaped by the requirements of mass appeal and the emphasis therefore is on shock, suspense and pity. The audience is left with a warm, self-satisfied feeling that people are awfully kind—that being what the screen Merrick repeatedly declares.

In addition to Hurt, the principals are Anthony Hopkins (Treves), Anne Bancroft (Mrs. Kendal), John Gielgud (administrative head of the hospital), Freddie Jones (Merrick's freak-show boss), and Wendy Hiller (head matron). The screenplay is by Christopher DeVore and Eric Bergren, with David Lynch.

Since its release a year ago, Pastor Vega's first fictional film, *Portrait of Teresa*, has been seen by approximately one-fifth of Cuba's population of ten million. It is, according to the American distributors, by all odds the most controversial film to be shown in that country since the revolution. And no wonder, since it deals head-on with what is probably the most difficult social change that is being attempted by that revolution. The traditional dominance of men over women is under attack in Castro's Cuba and *Portrait of Teresa* is a domestic tragedy based on this challenge to what is probably the country's most deeply bedded psychological assumption.

In the best sense, it is a small picture, one involving only a few people in more or less commonplace activities, but treating them with an insight that draws you into their lives. Though the issue dividing Teresa and her husband is fatal to their marriage, the viewer retains a

BUSINESS AND SOCIETY REVIEW

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sympathy and affection for them both.

By his own estimate and that of a considerable segment of his society, Ramon (Adolfo Llaurado) is an exemplary young man. He is a television repairman, industrious, ambitious, solicitous for the welfare of his wife and three small children. He is a good neighbor, a helpful colleague, a loving husband and father.

Teresa (Daisy Granados) has matching virtues, but something more. She is a talented organizer, is involved in the fortunes of a dance group in the textile plant where she works and is determined not to spend her life shuttling between job and home. She is smarter than her husband, or at least more energetic and resourceful, and refuses to live in his shadow.

They split for a time. She becomes even more deeply engaged with the dance group; he, footloose and aggrieved, takes a mistress. There is an attempt at reconciliation, Ramon protesting how much he misses his family, how he regrets his brief affair, how he hopes they can start again. But Teresa tests him. How would it seem, she says, if she too had been unfaithful (it is possible that she has been, with the dance director). Ramon brushes aside this suggestion, complaining that he is trying to re-create their marriage, while she suggests an absurdity. She presses her question; he cannot see it as a serious possibility. Men and women are different; there is no more to be said. It is not an argument about sex but about identity. Teresa is eager to be a wife, but more determined first to be herself. Ramon quite honestly can't understand her, and they break.

Llaurado is a strong, convincing actor and so is Raul Pomares as Teresa's colleague and possible lover. But Granados sets the tone and maintains the vitality of the film. She is handsome, formidable and deeply appealing. She was seen here a few years ago in *Memories of Underdevelopment* and I shall watch for her to appear again soon.

For all its excellence, *Portrait of Teresa* must be appreciated in context. Sexism has been in the North American consciousness for some time, and the film's discovery and sometimes didactic explanation of the problem may seem naïve to viewers here. We are far from resolving the issue, but we know by heart how the argument goes. Thus Ramon seems at times not only stubborn but obtuse, and some of Teresa's exhortations sound like variations on the obvious. The picture was made for a Havana audience, not for one in Queens, and the interest, for me, in addition to the magnetism of the performances, was in seeing how these Cubans repeat the same steps, but a couple of measures behind, that we are laboriously taking toward equality between men and women.

It's a minor point, but the film ends with a frozen frame of Teresa running. If this device is used much longer by directors in search of a neat ending, I'll come to regret that *The 400 Blows* was ever made. □

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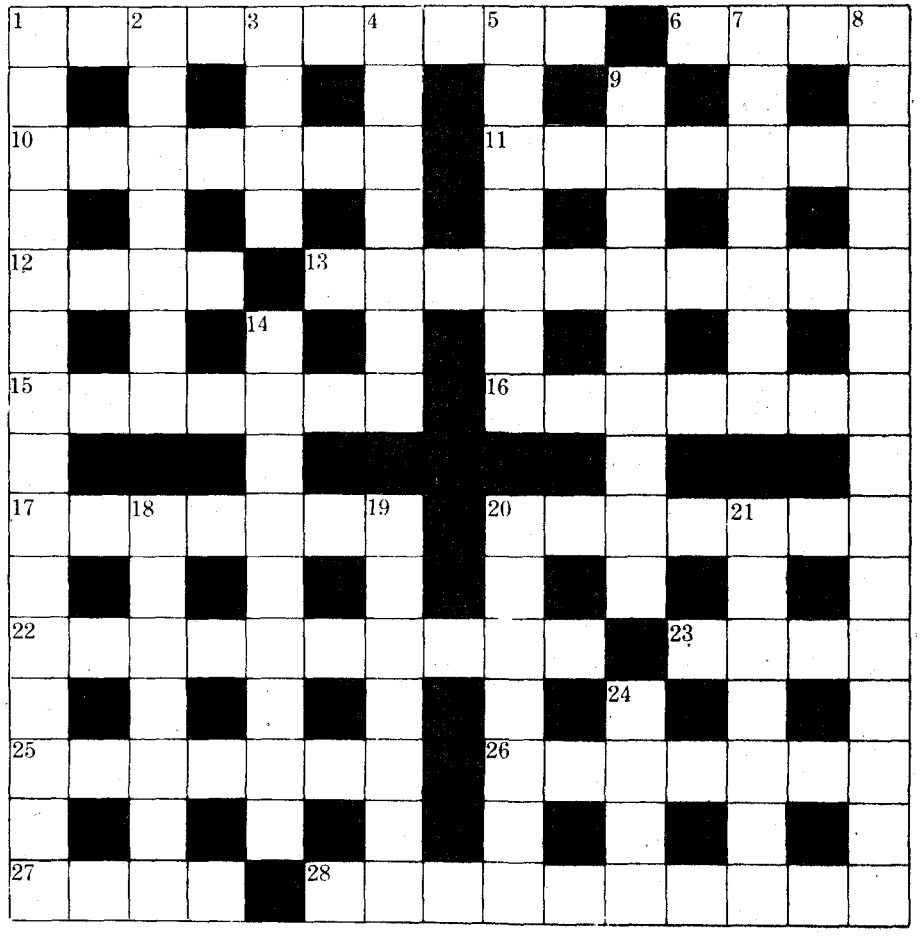

ACROSS

1 Not a sign of life in old Rome! (6,4)
6 There's nothing in it for a sort of old poet. (4)
10 What one does when one dribbles is what the baby does, as they say. (7)
11 A windy description. (7)
12 One way to see something is like telepathy going to your head. (4)
13 In case I have a type of travel that's sometimes rapid at first? (10)
15 How are those things that say "Welcome" used? (Shapes and sizes, general appearance, etc.) (7)
16 From that as the source, appearing just for thee? (7)
17 One getting along, as they say, holds terror in part. (7)
20 Eliot's Gypsy was. (7)
22 Such a warning goes right to the top! (4,4,2)
23 Roguish bow. (4)
25 Related to a sort of splice—until Pa got mixed up! (7)
26 The one with a hammer and water overseas lived alone and liked it. (7)
27 A piece of grass and a drink from the fountain. (4)
28 A fool is about positive, as one finds out. (10)

DOWN

1 Holdings of the board? The other way around, if you want to know how much in volume. (5,2,8)
2 What were Scots told to do with such? Lay low! (7)
3 What a cat might 23. (4)
4 Sometimes described as being just dry places. (7)
5 Stand for anything? Eh? Never! (4-3)
7 Mineral and sort of oil plant. (7)
8 In *La Gioconda* does it imply old measures of time? (5,2,3,5)
9 With G & S, one has a lot of the unhappy kind. (9)
14 An *aficionado* acts it badly—which is highly capricious. (9)
18 Came down little by little. (7)
19 Shoots holes in what some like to tell. (7)
20 Life is one in *The Merry Wives*, and close to let loose. (7)
21 Some people give a politician D with this. (7)
24 Small horse pistol? (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1838

ACROSS: 1 Waltzing Matilda; 9 Ionia; 10 Walked off; 11 Episode; 12 Outwear; 13 Oversee; 14 Stripes; 16 Sisters; 19 Picasso; 21 Sniffle, 23 Ratters; 24 Alienated; 25 Rhomb; 26 Foreign exchange. DOWN: 1 White House Staff; 2 Lankiness; 3 Zealous; 4 Nowhere; 5 Mellows; 6 Theater; 7 Loose; 8 As far as possible; 15 Paste down; 17 Effendi; 18 Sweeten; 19 Paradox; 20 Catarrh; 22 Icier.

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John Alcorn, Marshall Arisman, Tony Auth, Seymour Chwast, Robert Grossman, Frances Jetter, Ed Koren, David Levine, Lou Myers, Ed Sorel illustrate it.

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